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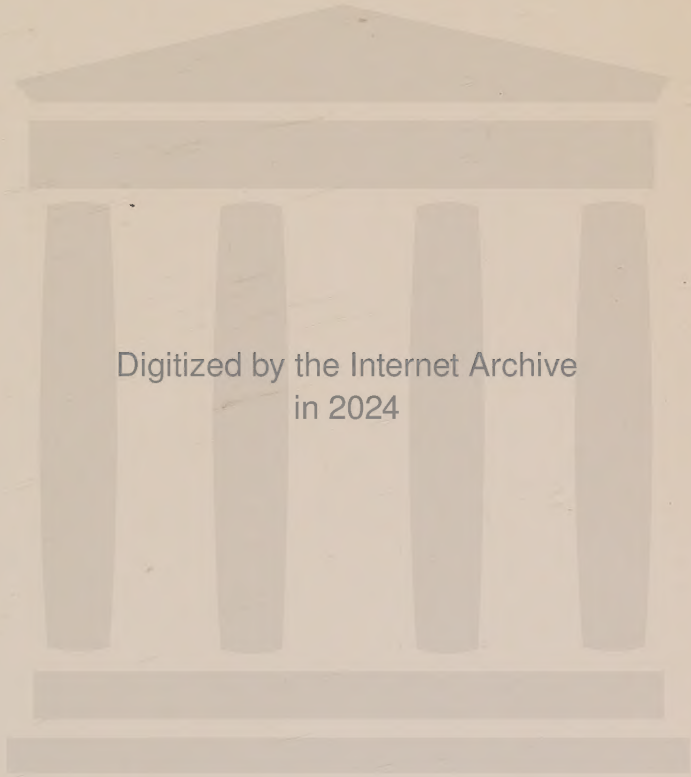
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THE

MONKS OF THE WEST,

FROM ST. BENEDICT TO ST. BERNARD.

BY

THE COUNT DE MONTALEMBERT,

MEMBER OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

FIDE ET VERITATE.

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VOL. I.

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1872.

DEDICATION.

TO POPE PIUS IX.

Most Holy Father,

I lay at the feet of your Holiness a book which, for many reasons, owes its homage to you. Intended to vindicate the glory of one of the greatest institutions of Christianity, this work specially solicits the benediction of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the supreme head and natural protector of the Monastic Order. Long and often interrupted, sometimes for the service of the Church and of yourself, these studies were taken up again at the voice of your Holiness, when, amid the enthusiasm not to be forgotten which hailed your accession, you declared, in a celebrated encyclical letter, the duties and rights of the Religious Orders, and recognized in them "those chosen phalanxes of the army of Christ which have always been the bulwark and ornament of the Christian republic, as well as of civil society."[1]

Your Holiness is well aware, moreover, that this homage is in no way intended to withdraw from criticism or discussion, a work subject to all human imperfections

[1] "Lectissimas illas auxiliares Christi militum turmas, quæ maximo tum Christianæ, tum civili reipublicæ usui, ornamento atque præsidio semper fuerunt." — *Encyclical Letter* of June 17, 1847.

and uncertainties, and which assumes only to enter upon questions open to the free estimate of all Christians.

It is solely in consideration of the melancholy and singular circumstances in which we are placed, that you will design, most Holy Father, to hear, and perhaps to grant, the desire of one of your most devoted sons, ambitious of imprinting upon the labor of twenty years the seal of his affectionate veneration for your person and your authority. What Catholic could, in our days, give himself up to the peaceful study of the past, without being troubled by the thought of the dangers and trials by which the Holy See is at present assailed, without desiring to offer up a filial tribute to him in whom we revere, not only the minister of infallible truth, but also the image of justice and good faith, of courage and honor, shamefully overpowered by violence and deceit?

Accept, then, most Holy Father, this humble offering of a heart inspired by a sincere admiration for your virtues, an ardent and respectful sympathy for your sorrows, and an unshaken fidelity to your imprescriptible rights.

I am, with the deepest respect,

Your Holiness's

Most humble and most obedient

Servant and Son,

CH. DE MONTALEMBERT.

April 21, 1860.

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THE MONKS OF THE WEST.

INTRODUCTION.

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Cæterum et mihi, vetustas res scribenti, nescio quo pacto, antiquus fit animus.
TITUS LIVIUS.

THIS work originated in a purpose more limited than its title implies. After having narrated, more than twenty years since, in the *Histoire de Sainte Elisabeth*, the life of a young woman in whom was epitomized the Catholic poetry of suffering and of love, and whose modest and forgotten existence belonged nevertheless to the most resplendent epoch of the middle ages, I had proposed to myself a task more difficult: I desired, in writing the life of a great monk, to contribute to the vindication of the monastic orders. Happy to have been able to attract some attention to an aspect of religious history too long obscured and forgotten, by justifying the action of Catholicism upon the most tender and exalted sentiments of the human heart, I hoped, by a sketch of another kind, to secure the same suffrages in vindicating Catholic and historic truth upon the ground where it has been most misconstrued, and where it still encounters the greatest antipathies and prejudices.

The name of St. Bernard immediately recurs to any inquirer who seeks the most accomplished type of the Religious. No other man has shed so much glory over the frock of the monk. Yet, notwithstanding, strange to tell! none of the numerous authors who have written his history, excepting his first biographers, who commenced their work during his life, seem to have understood the fact which both governed and explained his career — his monastic profession. By consent of all, St. Bernard was a great man and a man of genius; he exercised upon his age an ascendency without

parallel; he reigned by eloquence, virtue, and courage. More than once he decided the fate of nations and of crowns — at one time, even, he held in his hands the destiny of the Church. He was able to influence Europe, and to precipitate her upon the East; he was able to combat and overcome, in Abailard, the precursor of modern rationalism. All the world knows and says as much — by consent of all he takes rank by the side of Ximenes, of Richelieu, and of Bossuet. But that is not enough. If he was — and who can doubt it? — a great orator, a great writer, and a great man; he neither knew it nor cared for it. He was, and above all wished to be, something entirely different: he was a monk and a saint; he lived in a cloister and worked miracles.

The Church has established and defined the sanctity of Bernard — but history remains charged with the mission of recounting his life, and of explaining the marvellous influence which he exercised upon his contemporaries.

But in proceeding to study the life of this great man, who was a monk, we find that the popes, the bishops, and the saints, who were then the honor and bulwark of Christian society, came, like him, all, or nearly all, from the monastic order. What were they, then, these monks? — from whence came they? — and what had they done till then to occupy so high a place in the destinies of the world? It is necessary, first of all, to resolve these questions.

And there is more. In attempting to judge the age in which St. Bernard lived, we perceive that it is impossible either to explain or to comprehend it without recognizing it as animated by the same breath which had vivified an anterior epoch, of which this was but the direct and faithful continuation.

If the twelfth century did homage to the genius and the virtue of the monk Bernard, it is because the eleventh century had been regenerated and penetrated by the virtue and the genius of the monk who was called Gregory VII. Neither the epoch nor the work of Bernard should be looked at apart from the salutary crisis which had prepared the one and made the other possible: a simple monk could never have been heard and obeyed as Bernard was, if his undisputed greatness had not been preceded by the contests, the trials, and the posthumous victory of that other monk who died six years before his birth. It is, then, necessary not only to characterize by a conscientious examination the pontificate of the greatest of those popes who have proceeded from the monastic class, but also to pass in review the whole

period which connected the last struggles of Gregory with the first efforts of Bernard, and to thus attempt the recital of the gravest and most glorious strife in which the Church ever was engaged, and in which the monks stood foremost in suffering as in honor.

But even that is not enough. Far from being the founders of the monastic order, Gregory VII. and Bernard were but produced by it, like thousands more of their contemporaries. That institution had existed more than five centuries when these great men learnt how to draw from it so marvellous a strength. To know its origin, to appreciate its nature and its services, it is necessary to go back to another Gregory — to St. Gregory the Great, to the first pope who came from the cloister; and further still, to St. Benedict, legislator and patriarch of the monks of the West. It is necessary at least to glance at the superhuman efforts made during these five centuries by legions of monks, perpetually renewed, to subdue, to pacify, to discipline, and to purify the savage nations amongst whom they labored, and of whom twenty barbarous tribes were successively transformed into Christian nations. It would be cruel injustice and ingratitude to pass by in silence twenty generations of indomitable laborers, who had cleared the thorns from the souls of our fathers, as they cleared the soil of Christian Europe, and had left only the labor of the reaper to Bernard and his contemporaries.

The volumes of which I now begin the publication are destined to this preliminary task.

Ambitious of carrying my readers with me on the way which I have opened to myself, my intention by this long preamble has been to show what the Monastic Order was, and what it had done for the Catholic world, before the advent of St. Bernard to the first place in the esteem and admiration of Christendom in his time. In a literary point of view, I know, it is unwise to diffuse thus over a long series of years, and a multitude of names for the most part forgotten, the interest which it would be so easy to concentrate upon one luminous point, upon one superior genius. It is an enterprise of which I perceive the danger. Besides, in showing thus so many great men and great works before coming to him who ought to be the hero of my book, I am aware that I enfeeble the effect of his individual grandeur, the merit of his devotion, the animation of the tale. I should take care to avoid this peril if I wrote only for success. But there is to every Christian a beauty superior to art — the beauty of truth. There is something which concerns us more closely than the

glory of all the heroes and even of all the saints — and that is, the honor of the Church, and her providential progress through the midst of the storms and darkness of history. I was loath to sacrifice the honor of an august institution, too long calumniated and proscribed, to the honor of a single man. Had I even been thus tempted, that hero himself, Bernard, the great apostle of justice and of truth, would have resented my so doing — he would not pardon me for exalting himself at the expense of his predecessors and his masters.

The subject, thus developed, embraces but too vast a field — it belongs at once to the present and to the past. The links which attach it to all our history are numerous and manifest. When we look at the map of ancient France, or of any one of our provinces, no matter which, we encounter at each step the names of abbeys, of chapter-houses, of convents, of priories, of hermitages, which mark the dwelling-place of so many monastic colonies. Where is the town which has not been founded, or enriched, or protected by some religious community? Where is the church which owes not to them a patron, a relic, a pious and popular tradition? Wherever there is a luxuriant forest, a pure stream, a majestic hill, we may be sure that Religion has there left her stamp by the hand of the monk. That impression has also marked itself in universal and lasting lines upon the laws, the arts, the manners — upon the entire aspect of our ancient society. Christendom, in its youth, has been throughout vivified, directed, and constituted by the monastic spirit. Wherever we interrogate the monuments of the past, not only in France but in all Europe — in Spain as in Sweden, in Scotland as in Sicily — everywhere rises before us the memory of the monk, — the traces, ill-effaced, of his labors, of his power, of his benefactions, from the humble furrow which he has been the first to draw in the bogs of Brittany or of Ireland, up to the extinguished splendors of Marmoutier and Cluny, of Melrose and the Escurial.

And there is also a contemporary interest by the side of this interest of the past. Universally proscribed and dishonored during the eighteenth century, in the nineteenth the religious orders everywhere reappear. Our age has witnessed, at the same time, their burial and their resurrection. *Here* we have succeeded in rooting out their last remnants, and *there* they have already renewed their life. Wherever the Catholic religion is not the object of open persecution, as in Sweden — wherever she has been

able to obtain her legitimate portion of modern liberty — they reappear as of themselves. We have despoiled and proscribed them — we see them everywhere return, sometimes under new names and appearances, but always with their ancient spirit. They neither reclaim nor regret their antique grandeur. They limit themselves to living — to preaching by word and by example — without wealth, without pomp, without legal rights, but not without force nor without trials — not without friends, nor, above all, without enemies.

Friends and enemies are alike interested to know from whence they come, and whence they have drawn the secret of a life so tenacious and so fruitful. I offer to the one as to the other a tale which shall not be a panegyric nor even an apology, but the sincere testimony of a friend, of an admirer, who desires to preserve the impartial equity which history demands, and who will conceal no stain that he may have the fuller right of veiling no glory.

CHAPTER II.

FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTER OF MONASTIC INSTITUTIONS.

Quest' altri fuochi tutti contemplanti
Uomini furo, accesi di quel caldo
Che fa nascer i fiori e i frutti santi.
Qui è Macario, qui è Romoaldo:
Qui son li frati miei, che dentro a' chiostri
Fermaro i piedi, e tennero 'l cor saldo.

ST. BENEDICT *to* DANTE. — *Paradiso*, xxii.

BEFORE entering upon this history, it seems necessary to make some observations on the fundamental character of monastic self-devotion — upon that which has been the principle at once of the services it has rendered, and the hate which it has inspired.

Some years ago, who understood what a monk really was?

For myself, I had no doubt on the subject when I commenced this work. I believed that I knew something which approached to the idea of a saint — to that of the Church; but I had not the least notion of what a monk might be, or of the monastic order. I was like my time. In all the course of my education, domestic or public, no one, not even among those who were specially charged to teach me religion and

history, no one considered it necessary to give me the least conception of the religious orders. Thirty years had scarcely passed since their ruin; and already they were treated as a lost species, of whom fossil bones reappeared from time to time, exciting curiosity or repugnance, but who had no longer a place in history among the living. I imagine that most men of my own age regarded them thus. Have not we all come forth from college knowing by heart the list of the mistresses of Jupiter, but ignorant even of the names of the founders of those religious orders which have civilized Europe, and so often saved the Church?

The first time that I saw the dress of a monk — must I confess it? — was on the boards of a theatre, in one of those ignoble parodies which hold, too often among modern nations, the place of the pomps and solemnities of religion. Some years later I encountered, for the first time, a real monk; it was at the foot of the Grande Chartreuse, at the entrance of that wild gorge, on the brink of that bounding torrent, which no one can ever forget who has once visited that celebrated solitude. I knew nothing then of the services or of the glories which that despised cowl ought to have recalled to the least instructed Christian; but I remember still the surprise and emotion into which that image of a vanished world threw my heart. To-day, even, after so many other emotions, so many different contests, so many labors which have revealed to me the immortal grandeur of the part taken by the religious orders in the Church, this recollection survives, and steals over me with infinite sweetness. How much I wish that this book may leave a similar impression upon those who encounter it on their way, and inspire some not only with respect for that vanquished grandeur, but with the desire to study it, and the duty of rendering to it justice!

We may, besides, without excess of ambition, claim for the monk a justice more complete than that which he has yet obtained, even from the greater number of the Christian apologists of recent times. In taking up the defence of the religious orders, these writers have seemed to demand grace for those august institutions in the name of the services which they have rendered to the sciences, to letters, and to agriculture. This is to boast the incidental at the expense of the essential. We are doubtless obliged to acknowledge and admire the cultivation of so many forests and deserts, the transcription and preservation of so many literary and historical monuments, and that monastic erudition which we

know nothing to replace; these are great services rendered to humanity, which ought, if humanity were just, to shelter the monks under a celestial shield. But there is, besides, something far more worthy of admiration and gratitude — the permanent strife of moral freedom against the bondage of the flesh; the constant effort of a consecrated will in the pursuit and conquest of Christian virtue; the victorious flight of the soul into those supreme regions where she finds again her true, her immortal grandeur. Institutions simply human, powers merely temporal, might perhaps confer upon society the same temporal benefits: that which human powers cannot do, that which they have never undertaken, and in which they never could succeed, is to discipline the soul, to transform it by chastity, by obedience, by sacrifice and humility; to recreate the man wasted by sin into such virtue, that the prodigies of evangelical perfection have become, during long centuries, the daily history of the Church. It is in this that we see the design of the monks, and what they have done. Among so many founders and legislators of the religious life, not one has dreamt of assigning the cultivation of the soil, the copying of manuscripts, the progress of arts and letters, the preservation of historical monuments, as a special aim to his disciples. These offices have been only accessory — the consequence, often indirect and involuntary, of an institution which had in view nothing but the education of the human soul, its conformity to the law of Christ, and the expiation of its native guilt by a life of sacrifice and mortification. This was for all of them the end and the beginning, the supreme object of existence, the unique ambition, the sole merit, and the sovereign victory.

For those who do not acknowledge the original fall, and the double necessity of human effort and divine grace to elevate us above the condition of fallen nature, it is clear that the monastic life can be nothing but a grand and lamentable aberration. For those who neither know nor comprehend the struggles of the soul which seeks, in the love of God elevated to heroism, a victorious weapon and sovereign remedy against the inordinate love of the creature, that mysterious worship of chastity, which is the essential condition of the life of the cloister, must always remain unintelligible. But, to such minds, the Christian revelation and the priesthood instituted by Jesus Christ are equally inadmissible. On the other side, every man who believes in the incarnation of the Son of God and the divinity of the Gospel, ought to

recognize in monastic life the most noble effort which has ever been made to overcome corrupted nature and to approach to Christian perfection. Every Christian who believes in the perpetuity of the Church ought to discern and venerate in this institution, let its scandals and abuses be what they will, the imperishable seed of ecclesiastical self-devotion.

Thus is explained, on one side, the immense importance of the services which the regular clergy have rendered to religion, and, on the other, the special and constant animosity which the enemies of the Church have always displayed against them. We have but to open the history of Catholic nations, to be impressed by the presence of this double spectacle. Since the end of the Roman persecution, the grandeur, the liberty, and the prosperity of the Church have always been exactly proportioned to the power, the regularity, and the sanctity of the religious orders which she embraces within her bosom.[1] We can affirm it without fear. Everywhere and always she has flourished most when her religious communities have been most numerous, most fervent, and most free.

To the period immediately following the peace of the Church, the monks of the Thebaide and of Palestine, of Lerins and of Marmoutier, secured innumerable champions of orthodoxy against the tyrannous Arians of the Lower Empire. In proportion as the Franks achieved the conquest of Gaul, and became the preponderating race amongst all the Germanic races, they permitted themselves to be influenced, converted, and directed by the sons of St. Benedict and of St. Columba.

From the seventh to the ninth century, it was the Bene-

[1] The religious orders may generally be classed in four great categories: 1st, The *Monks* properly so called, which comprehend the orders of St. Basil and St. Benedict, with all their branches, Cluny, the Camaldules, the Chartreux, the Cistercians, the Celestines, Fontevrault, Grandmont, — all anterior to the thirteenth century; 2d, The *Regular Canons*, who follow the rule of St. Augustine, and who have neither gained great distinction nor rendered eminent services, but to whom are attached two illustrious orders, that of Prémontré, and that of La Merci, for the redemption of captives; 3d, The *Brothers*, or religious mendicants (Frati), which comprehend the Dominicans, the Franciscans (with all their subdivisions, Conventuals, Observantins, Récollets, Capucins), the Carmelites, the Augustines, the Servites, the Minimes, and, generally, all the orders created from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries; 4th and lastly, The *Regular Clerks*, a form affected exclusively by the orders created since the sixteenth century, those of the Jesuits, the Théatins, the Barnabites, &c. The Lazarists, the Oratorians, the Eudistes, are only, like the Sulpiciens, secular priests united in a congregation.

dictines who gave to the Church, Belgium, England, Germany, and Scandinavia, and who furnished, to the founders of all the kingdoms of the West, auxiliaries indispensable to the establishment of a Christian civilization.

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the same Benedictines, concentrated under the strong direction of the order of Cluny, contended victoriously against the dangers and abuses of the feudal system, and gave to St. Gregory VII. the army which he needed to save the independence of the Church, to destroy the concubinage of the priests, simony, and the secular occupation of ecclesiastical benefices.

In the twelfth century, the order of Citeaux, crowned by St. Bernard with unrivalled splendor, became the principal instrument of the beneficent supremacy of the Holy See, served as an asylum to St. Thomas of Canterbury, and as a bulwark to the liberty of the Church, till the time of Boniface VIII.[2]

In the thirteenth and fourteenth, the new orders instituted by St. Francis, St. Dominic, and their emulators, maintained and propagated the faith among the souls of men and the social institutions throughout the empire; renewed the contest against the venom of heresy, and against the corruption of morals; substituted for the crusades the work of redeeming Christian captives; and produced, in St. Thomas Aquinas, the prince of Christian doctors and moralists, whom faith consults as the most faithful interpreter of Catholic tradition, and in whom reason recognizes the glorious rival of Aristotle and Descartes.

In the fifteenth century, the Church underwent the great schism, and all the scandals which resulted from it. The ancient orders, also, had lost their primitive fervor, and no new institution came to renew the vigor of the Christian blood.

And we know what was, in the sixteenth century, the invincible progress of Reform, until the day when the Jesuits, solemnly approved by the last General Council, came forward to intercept the torrent, and preserve to the Church at least the half of her inheritance.

In the seventeenth century, the splendors of Catholic eloquence and science are contemporary with the great reforms of St. Maur and of La Trappe, with the foundations of St.

[2] It is told that this Pope gave to the Abbot of Citeaux the privilege reserved to the popes, of having a seal where that prelate was represented sitting — saying to him, *Quoniam tu mecum solus stetisti, solus mecum sedebis.*

Francis de Sales and St. Vincent de Paul, and with the marvellous blossoming of Christian charity in all these congregations of women, most part of which survive for our happiness.

Finally, in the eighteenth century, the religious orders, absorbed definitively by the *Commende*, infected by the corruptions which were engendered by the encroachments of the temporal power, or decimated by persecution, succumbed almost entirely, but at the same time the Church sustained the most humiliating trials, and the world has never been able to believe her nearer to her fall.

Where can we find in history a lesson more conclusive and incontestable than this perpetual coincidence? And can we not draw the same inference from the war, more or less flagrant, which all the centuries have waged against the Church? Is it not the monks whom the enemies and oppressors of the Church have always most detested and most pursued? Without denying their too real errors, or the fatal pretexts furnished by abuses too long unpunished, ought we not to confess that wherever it has been resolved to strike at the heart of religion, it has always been the religious orders who have received the first blows? The attempts against the authority of the Roman See, against the independence of the episcopate, against the constitution and property of the secular clergy, have they not been always and everywhere preceded by the suppression and spoliation of the regular communities? Have not Henry VIII. and the first Reformers been servilely imitated in these tactics by Joseph II. and the French Revolution? And if we had leisure or courage to throw here a rapid glance over the history of the nineteenth century, should we not see the adversaries of Catholicism everywhere adjured to extirpate the last remnants of monastic institutions, and to smother the germs of that reviving life of the cloister which is always to be found accompanying the revival of the faith and usages of Christianity itself?

God forbid that we should desire to deduce from these marvellous coincidences an absolute identity between the Church and the religious orders! We would not confound institutions holy and salutary, but subject to all human infirmities, with the sole institution founded by God and for eternity. We do not deny that the Church may subsist and triumph without them. But up to the present time it has pleased God to establish a glorious conjunction between the prosperity of the Church and that of the religious orders —

between their liberty and hers. During ten centuries these orders have been the surest bulwark of the Church, and have supplied her most illustrious pontiffs. During ten centuries the secular clergy, naturally too much exposed to the influences of the world, have almost always been surpassed in devotion, in sanctity, and in courage, by the regulars, withdrawn within their monasteries as within citadels, where they have regained peace and strength in re-baptizing themselves in austerity, discipline, and silence. During ten centuries the Religious have been, as they still are in our own day, the most intrepid missionaries, the most indefatigable propagators of the Gospel. And, in brief, during ten centuries, the religious orders have endowed the Church at the same time with an army active and permanent and with a trustworthy reserve. Like the different forces of the same army, they have displayed, even in the diversity of their rules and tendencies, that variety in unity which constitutes the fruitful loveliness and sovereign majesty of Catholicism; and, beyond this, have practised, as far as consists with human weakness, those evangelical precepts, the accomplishment of which conducts to Christian perfection. Occupied, above all, in opening to themselves the way to heaven, they have given to the world the grandest and most noble of lessons, in demonstrating how high a man can attain upon the wings of love purified by sacrifice, and of enthusiasm regulated by faith.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE TRUE NATURE OF THE MONASTIC VOCATION.

Confortare, et esto vir.
3 *Reg.* ii. 2.

. . . Se 'l mondo sapesse 'l cuor ch' egli ebbe. . .
Assai lo loda, e più lo loderebbe.
DANTE, *Parad.*, c. 6.

But scarcely has our first glance discerned the prodigious influence exercised by the religious orders upon Christian society, when we are led to inquire from whence has come that great body of men, who during so many ages have peopled the monasteries and recruited the permanent army of prayer and charity?

In the depths of human nature there exists without doubt a tendency, instinctive, though confused and evanescent, towards retirement and solitude. Its manifestations are found in all the epochs of history, in all religions, in all societies, except, perhaps, among savage tribes, or in the bosom of that corrupt civilization which, by its excess and over-refinement, too often leads humanity back to a savage condition. What man, unless completely depraved by vice, or weighed down by age and cupidity, has not experienced, once at least, before his death, the attraction of solitude? Who has not felt the ardent desire for a repose lasting and regular, in which wisdom and virtue might furnish a perpetual aliment to the life of the heart and spirit, to science and to love? Where is the Christian soul, however enchained it may be by the bonds of sin, however soiled it may have been by contact with terrestrial baseness, who has not sometimes sighed after the charm and repose of the religious life, and inhaled from afar the perfume which is exhaled from some one of those sweet and secret asylums[1] inhabited by virtue and devotion, and consecrated to meditations on eternity? Who has not dreamt of a future, in which, for one day at least, he might say of himself with the prophet, "*Sedebit solitarius et tacebit?*" Who has not comprehended that it is necessary to reserve at least some corners of the world, beyond reach of the revolutions, the agitations, and the covetings of ordinary life, that there the harmonies of human adoration and gratitude may be added to all the voices of nature, to those choirs of creation which bless and adore the Creator of all?

But in order that this inclination towards solitude should not degenerate into infirmity of spirit, and weak desertion of the duties and trials of life, Religion, with all that is purest and strongest in her, must come to justify and to regulate it. "I approve," said an illustrious French bishop in the twelfth century, — "I approve the life of those men for whom a city is but a prison, who find their paradise in solitude, who live there by the labor of their hands, or, who seek to renew their souls by the sweetness of a life of contemplation — men who drink, with the lips of their hearts, at the fountain of life, and forget all that is behind them in gazing at that which is before; but neither the profoundest forests nor the highest mountains can give happiness to a man, if he has not in him-

[1] "Habent montes castelli secreta suavia, ut velut anachoretæ, præstante Domino, feliciter esse possitis." — Cassiodor., *Divin. Litter.*, c. 29.

self the solitude of the soul, the peace of conscience, the elevation of heart, *ascensiones in corde;* otherwise there is no solitude which does not produce idleness, curiosity, and vainglory, with storms of the most perilous temptations."[2]

Thus, for the monks, a life of solitude was neither a weakness nor a caprice; it was an institution in which they found, as was demonstrated even by the language which they spoke, order and rule.

It was not, then, save in the exceptions inseparable from all general phenomena, an unreflecting instinct, an emotion evanescent or superficial, which enrolled so many Christians, in the bloom of youth, under the severe discipline of the cloister. On the contrary, when we search in the monuments of history for the natural interpretation and human origin of monastic vocations, we perceive that they were born, above all, of a conviction, often precocious, but always profound and reasonable, of the vanity of human things, and of the constant defeat of virtue and truth upon earth.

The triumph of evil here below, under its most repugnant form — that of falsehood and deceit — is specially impressed upon us by the history of the human race, as well as by the history of the most obscure individual life. We all receive that cruel and bitter lesson. We have all before us that poignant experience. But it comes to us tardily, and, if I dare to say so, from below. It proceeds out of the disappointments and fatigues of a life in which evil too often disputes the feeble desires of good. It comes at an age when, already enervated by our faults, depressed by our disappointments, and stained by our falls, we are no longer capable of changing our life, of coming to a generous resolution, and of throwing off the yoke.

But on the contrary, for those monks of old who filled the Christian world with their works and their name, that conviction came from above, solely by the revelations of faith, and by the contemplation of God's eternal justice. It seized upon them in the dawn of their existence, at that decisive moment when the freedom of soul which age fetters and annuls existed in all its fulness — at that moment when

[2] "Anachoretarum vitam non improbo, . . . quibus est solitudo paradisus et civitas carcer. . . . Non beatum faciunt hominem secreta sylvarum, cacumina montium, si secum non habet solitudinem mentis, sabbatum cordis, tranquillitatem conscientiæ, ascensiones in corde, sine quibus omnem solitudinem comitantur mentis acedia, curiositas, vana gloria, periculosæ tentationum procellæ." — *Yves de Chartres*, ep. 192. See also his fine Epist. 256 upon the advantages of the cenobitical life compared with that of the anchorites.

every noble soul aspires to all that is great, beautiful, and strong, and feels itself capable of all efforts, all courage, all devotion, all generous impulses. From the bosom of that fugitive youth, and with that vigor, that moral elasticity, which so often vanishes before we are even entirely conscious of its possession, they took their flight towards a region where virtue and truth are inaccessible to humiliation.

Resolute to escape, as much as was in nature, from the empire of falsehood and wickedness, from the instability of human things and the lamentable weakness of old age, these young athletes sought to put their life in harmony with their convictions; and by the warm and pure inspiration of their free will, they consecrated to the service of their neighbor, to the love of God, to the profit of the soul, a virgin energy of which nothing had yet tarnished the purity or enfeebled the force.

One of the most singular of the errors which many apologists of the monastic life have fallen into, has been to regard it as a refuge for sorrowful souls, fatigued and discontented with their lot in the world, unable to hold the place from which society has banished them, consumed by disappointment, or broken by melancholy. "If there are refuges for the health of the body," says M. de Chateaubriand, "ah! permit religion to have such also for the health of the soul, which is still more subject to sickness, and the infirmities of which are so much more sad, so much more tedious and difficult to cure!" The idea is poetical and touching, but it is not true. Monasteries were never intended to collect the invalids of the world. It was not the sick souls, but on the contrary, the most vigorous and healthful which the human race has ever produced, who presented themselves in crowds to fill them. The religious life, far from being the refuge of the feeble, was, on the contrary, the arena of the strong.

Sometimes, it is true, by one of those marvellous contrasts which abound in the works inspired by religion, that career full of supernatural combats and triumphs, that life in which virtue and Christian strength attain their apotheosis, was precisely that in which some souls naturally infirm, and hearts wounded in the combats of worldly life, found for themselves a refuge. And as modern civilization, by the side of its incontestable benefits, has too often the drawback of augmenting the number and the intensity of the maladies of the

soul, it cannot be without interest, from a point of view purely social, to preserve for such a shelter, and to secure for them due treatment. It is very possible that, even on this account, the ruin of the religious orders has been a public calamity, and has not been without some influence upon that frightful increase in the number of suicides which is certified each year by the criminal statistics.[3]

But, to tell the truth, it is only in romance that we find disappointments, grief, and melancholy conducting to the cloister. I have found no serious or important trace of it in history, not even in the traditions of the degenerated communities of modern times, and much less in the heroic ages of their chronicles. Without doubt, some have been thrown into the cloister by great unhappiness, by irretrievable misfortune, by the loss of some one passionately loved; and I could cite some curious and touching examples of such. But they are exceedingly rare. To present us with a general theory of the religious life as an asylum for feebleness and sadness, as a place of refuge for that melancholy which was distinctly proscribed and expelled from the life of the cloister as a vice, under the name of *acedia*, is to go in the face both of facts and reason.

The distinctive characteristic which shines from all the series of great monastic creations and existences, and which I desire to exhibit before my readers, is strength: not that strength which man has in common with animals; not that material strength which demoralizes the world with its contemptible triumphs; not that external strength, the dangerous help of which is invoked too often by blind and cowardly Christians; not that strength which consists in imposing on others one's own convictions or interests: but that which signifies the discipline of self, the power of ruling, of restraining, of subduing rebellious nature — that strength which is a cardinal virtue, and which overcomes the world by courage and sacrifice. I do not hesitate to affirm that the monks, the true monks of the great ages of the Church,

[3] "The number of suicides has not ceased to increase each year since the criminal statistics included them." — *Report of M. Odillon Barrot, Keeper of the Seals, to the President of the Republic*, 29th September, 1849. This number was in 1826, 1739; in 1846, 3102; in 1852, 3674. It increased in 1856 to 4189. In the space of 27 years, from 1826 to 1853, 71,418 persons have in France voluntarily met their death. In England, despite the prejudice to the contrary, the number is not so great — from 1852 to 1856 it is ascertained that in the United Kingdom, amongst 24 millions of inhabitants, there were but 5415 suicides, which makes only 1100 per annum.

are the representatives of manhood under its most pure and most energetic form — of manhood intellectual and moral — of manhood, in some manner condensed by celibacy, protesting against all vulgarity [4] and baseness, condemning itself to efforts more great, sustained, and profound than are exacted by any worldly career, and by this means making of earth only a stepping-stone to heaven, and of life but a long series of victories.

Yes! thanks to the robust constitution which they have received from their founders — thanks to that incomparable discipline of soul which all the monastic legislators have succeeded in establishing — the monk draws from his solitude the treasure of a strength which the world has never surpassed, nor, indeed, equalled. "Solitude," says a venerable ecclesiastic of our day, "solitude is the mother-country of the strong — silence is their prayer." [5] The entire monastic history is but a demonstration of this truth. And how could it have been otherwise? What was this life, if not a permanent protest against human weakness — a reaction renewed every day against all that degrades and enervates man — a perpetual aspiration towards all that soars above this terrestrial life and fallen nature? In all monasteries, faithful to their primitive constitution, that scorn of life which is the secret of heroism, was taught and practised at every moment of the day. The soul, elevated to God even by the least important practices of its daily rule, offered to Him without ceasing that triumph which the purest forces and most generous instincts of human nature gained over the senses and the passions.

It results from this, that the monastic life has always been compared to a warfare. "Come and see," [6] said St John Chrysostom, "come and see the tents of the soldiers of Christ, come and see their order of battle; they fight every day, and every day they defeat and immolate the passions which assail us." [6] *Milites Christi* they had been previously designated by St. Augustine [7] and Cassiodorus. [8] The term

[4] "It is certain that in losing the institutions of monastic life, the human mind has lost a great school of originality. Now, all that contributes to maintain in humanity a tradition of moral nobleness is worthy of respect, and, in one sense, of regret, even when that result has been obtained through many abuses and prejudices." — Ernest Renan, *Journal des Debats* of the 16th January 1855.

[5] Le P. de Ravignam, *De l'Institut des Jésuites*, p. 31.

[6] S. Joan. Chrysost., *Homil. in Matth.*, 69-70, p. 771-779, ed. Gaume.

[7] Ed. Gaume, t. ii. 1237, and viii. 336. [8] *De Divin. Instit.*, c. 30.

of *miles*, which had been originally borne by armed citizens of the Roman republic, signified, at a later period, nothing more than mercenaries of the imperial armies; but when, later, and in proportion as the noble and free institutions of the Germanic races developed themselves, the word *miles* once more changed its acceptation and served to distinguish the chevalier of feudal times, that new analogy was adopted by the unanimous voice of the new nations. Charlemagne entitled the abbots of his empire *Chevaliers de l'Eglise*,[9] and all the biographers, all the historians, all the writers who have issued from the cloister, continue to recognize in the monastic order the *Chevalerie de Dieu*. That comparison between the two knighthoods, lay and monastic, is, we can affirm, the everyday language of the history of the religious orders, and of the biography of those saints who have founded and illustrated them. St. Anselm and St. Bernard employ it in almost every page of their writings. A century later, St. Francis of Assisi understood his mission in no other fashion. He said, in speaking of his chosen disciples, "These are my paladins of the Round Table." In the dreams of his youth, this son of a wool-merchant had seen the shop of his father full of bucklers, of lances, of military harness — a prophetic vision of the war which he should wage with the enemy of the human race; and in the decline of his life, the stigmata of the Passion, the marks of which he received, seemed to the eyes of his contemporaries the badge and emblazonry of Christ, whose invincible and valiant knight he was.[10]

And as the sacrifice of self is the principle of military courage, and the cause of that *prestige* which attaches itself to military glory above all other human renown, so, in the spiritual order, the daily sacrifice of self by monastic obedience explains and justifies the supreme regard which the Church has always accorded to the Monk. Thus also is ex-

[9] "Optamus enim vos, sicut decet *Ecclesiæ milites*, et interius devotos et exterius doctos esse."

[10] "Nocte quadam . . . videbatur ei domum suam totam habere plenam . . . sellis, clypeis, lanceis, et ceteris apparatibus. . . . Non consueverat talia in domo sua videre, sed potius pannorum cumulos ad vendendum. . . . Responsum est ei omnia hæc arma sua fore militumque suorum. . . . Opportune multum arma traduntur contra Fortem armatum militi pugnaturo." — Thomas de Celano, *Vita prima*, ap. Bolland, t. 11th Oct., p. 685. "Eia nunc, strenuissime miles, ipsius fer arma invictissimi ducis. . . . Fer vexillum. . . . Fer sigillum. . . . Dux in militia Christi futurus, armis deberes cœlestibus signoque crucis insignibus decorari." — S. Bonavent., *Vit. altera*, ibid., p. 779.

plained the necessity of minute and continual subjection in all monastic government, just as we meet in every army with rules of discipline sometimes puerile and vexatious in appearance, but the least infraction of which, in time of war, is punished with death.

The chivalrous courage which they displayed every day against sin and their own weakness, still animated them when they encountered princes and potentates who abused their authority. It is in this above all that we discover that moral energy which gives to man both the will and the might to resist injustice and to protest against the abuses of power, even when these abuses and iniquities do not fall directly upon himself. That energy, without which all the guarantees of order, of security, and of independence invented in politics are illusory, was inherent in the character and profession of the monks. From the earliest times of their history, and in the midst of the abject baseness of the Byzantine Court, they were remarked as the men who of all others spoke with the greatest freedom to kings.[11] From century to century, and so long as they remained free from the corruptions of temporal power, they pursued this glorious privilege. We shall see it on every page of this narrative; we shall see the monks armed with an intrepid freedom, a courage indomitable against oppression; and we shall comprehend what succor the innocent and unfortunate could derive from them, in those times when no one thought himself defenceless so long as he could invoke against his oppressor the curse of God and of the cowled heads.[12] At the distance of a thousand years we find the same calm and indomitable courage in the reprimand which St. Benedict addressed to King Totila,[13] and in the answer of the obscure prior of Solesmes to the Lord of Sablé, against whom he found it necessary to maintain the privileges of his priory. This nobleman, having met him one day upon the bridge of the town, said to him, "Monk, if I did not fear God, I would throw thee into the Sarthe!" "Monseigneur," answered the monk, "if you fear God, I have nothing to fear."[14]

[11] "Hoc enim maxime genus hominum summa cum libertate regibus collocuti sunt." Thus Montfaucon translates the passage from St. John Chrysostom, *Adv. Oppugn. Vit. Mon.*, p. 85, ed. Gaume.

[12] Cucullati. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. Gibson.

[13] S. Gregorii Magni, *Vit. S. Patr. Bened.*, c. 15.

[14] *MS. de la Bibl. Royale*, cited in the *Essai Hist. sur l'Abbaye de Solesmes*, 1846, p. 46. The prior was named Jean Bougler; he was elected in 1515, and decorated his church with the remarkable sculptures which are still admired there.

It was thus under the dictation of the monks that those civil and political guarantees were written, which the Christian rebels against the abuses of power wrested from their unjust masters. It was to the care of the monks that they confided these charters of liberty, in which the conditions of their obedience were inscribed.[15] It was in the cloister of the monks that they sought a sepulchre not only for the kings, the great men, and the conquerors, but also for the feeble and the vanquished. There the victims of tyranny, of injustice, of all the excesses of human power, found a last asylum.[16] There slept in peace, in the midst of perpetual prayer, the exile, the outlawed, the doomed.[17] These admirable verses of Statius upon the temple of Clemency, at Athens, which the monks have preserved to us, found their realization in the bosom of monastic life —

> "Sic tutum sacrasse loco mortalibus ægris
> Confugium, unde procul starent iræque minæque
> Regnaque. et a justis Fortuna recederet aris. . . .
> Huc victi bellis, patriâque e sede fugati, . . .
> Conveniunt, pacemque rogant." [18]

No men have ever showed less terror of the strongest, less weak complaisance towards power, than the monks. Amidst the peace and obedience of the cloister they tempered their hearts every day, as indomitable champions of right and truth, for the war against injustice. Noble spirits, hearts truly independent, were to be found nowhere more frequently than under the cowl. Souls calm and brave, upright and lofty, as well as humble and fervent, were there and abounded — souls such as Pascal calls *perfectly heroic.*

"Freedom," says a holy monk of the eighth century, "is not given up because humility freely bows its head." [19] And at the height of the middle ages another monk, Pierre de Blois, wrote those proud words, which express at once the political code of that epoch and the history of the monastic

[15] In testimony of this, to quote one example among a thousand, the Charter *de libertatibus comitatus Devoniæ* was preserved at Tavistock Abbey, Digby, x. 167.

[16] See in the *Formules Inédites de la Bibl. de Saint Gall*, published by M. de Rozière, how the abbots interceded with the nobles to obtain forgiveness for the serfs who had incurred the anger of their masters.

[17] See in Ingulph of Croyland, the fine history of Earl Waltheof, victim of the Normans, of whom we shall speak further on.

[18] *Theb.* xii. v. 481.

[19] "Nec ideo libertas succubuit, quia humilitas semetipsam libere prostravit." — Ambrosius Autpertus, *Abb. S. Vincentii, ad Vulturn.*, ann. 768.

order: — "There are two things for which all the faithful ought to resist to blood — justice and liberty." [20]

It is sufficient to say, that we find them little infected with that political servility which has so often and so lamentably disfigured the annals of the clergy, which began with Constantine, and which, sometimes forgotten or thrown off in those great emergencies, when human liberty and dignity have triumphantly displayed themselves, continually re-appears, like an incurable leprosy, in those other periods, far more prolonged and frequent, of debasement and servitude. The saints themselves have not always been able to escape the contagion of that fatal delusion, which has induced too many pontiffs and doctors to seek the ideal of Christian society in a resurrection of the Roman empire transformed into a Catholic monarchy. The monks, more than any other portion of the Christian community, more than any other ecclesiastical corporation, have kept themselves free of it. Seldom, very seldom, do we find among them the instruments or apostles of absolute power. When that anomaly presents itself, it disgusts us more here than elsewhere. I have noted some traces of that baseness, the contrast of which brings out all the clearer the masculine and noble independence which, in social and political matters, has always distinguished the monks of the ages of faith.

Mixing in the world, more perhaps than was expedient, and drawn, even by the trust and affection which they inspired, into the midst of interests and of conflicts to which they were strangers, they did not always issue out of these uninjured; but, on the other hand, they carried with them qualities of which the world stand always in great need, and for which it ought to have been more grateful. They did not believe that piety, orthodoxy, or even sanctity itself, could dispense with integrity and honor. When such a calamity befell, — when prelates or monks showed themselves indifferent or unfaithful to the duties of public life, to the obligations of uprightness, to the laws of humanity, of gratitude, or of friendship, their indignation was roused, and they did not fail to mark and stigmatize the culprits in their annals. We see that they invariably place the natural virtues, the services rendered to a country or to human society, side by side with those marvels of penitence and of the love of God which they have registered so carefully; and we love to fol-

[20] "Duo sunt, justitia et libertas, pro quibus quisque fidelis usque ad sanguinem stare debeat." — PETR. BLESENS., *De Inst. Episcop.*

low through all ages the long succession of monks, as active as they were pious, as courageous as fervent, to whom we may justly apply that brief and noble eulogium pronounced by the Saxon Chronicle upon an abbot who distinguished himself during the convulsions of the Norman Conquest. "He was a good monk and a good man, loved of God and of good men."[21]

For myself, who for more than twenty years have lived in the good and great company of the monks of other times, I declare that it is there above all, and perhaps there only, that I have recognized the school of true courage, true freedom, and true dignity: when, after long intervals, and from the midst of the painful experiences of political life, I returned to the study of their acts and writings, I met there another race, of other hearts and heroisms. I owe to them, in a point of view merely human, my thanks for having reconciled me to men, by opening to me a world in which I hardly ever found either an egotist or a liar, an ungrateful or servile soul. There I have beheld, there I have tasted, that noble independence which belongs, by right of their humility itself, to humble and magnanimous souls. There I have learned to understand how, and by what means, great corporations and successive generations of good men have been able to live at an equal distance from the unrestrained license and the abject servility which alternately characterize our modern society, in which individual man, conscious that he is nothing, that he has neither a root in the past nor an influence upon the future, prostrates himself entirely before the idol of the moment, reserving to himself only the right of demolishing, of betraying, and of forgetting it on the morrow.

And besides — why should not I acknowledge it? — even in the midst of this contemporary world, the downfalls and miseries of which have been to me so bitter, the Divine goodness brought me acquainted in my youth with the type of a monk of ancient times, in a man whose name and glory belong to our time and country.[22] Although he was not yet professed at the time when our souls and our lives drew close to each other, and although he has since entered an order apart from the monastic family of which I have become the historian, he revealed to me, better than all books, and

[21] "Fuit enim bonus monachus et bonus vir: propterea eum dilexerunt Deus et boni viri." — *Chron. Saxon.*, ad ann. 1137, p. 240, ed. Gibson.

[22] Father Lacordaire, the regenerator of the Dominican Order in France, and the most celebrated preacher of the day.

more clearly than all my studies of the past, the great and noble qualities which go to the making of a true monk — self-abnegation, fortitude, devotion, disinterestedness, solid and fervent piety, and that true independence which does not exclude filial obedience. His eloquence has astonished a country and a time accustomed to the victories of eloquence; his noble genius has conquered the admiration of the most rebellious critics. But he will be honored by God and by a Christian posterity, not so much as a writer and an orator, but as a monk austere and sincere.

His name is not needed here — all who read will have divined it. All will pardon me for this impulse of a heart younger than its age, and for this homage to the community of contests, ideas, and belief, which has united us for thirty years, and which has lasted through differences of sentiment as well as diversity of career. Our union, born amid the charming dreams and confidence of youth, has survived the reverses, the betrayals, the inconstancy, and the cowardices which have overshadowed our mature age, and has helped me to overleap the abyss which separates the present from the past.

Such an example, in spite of all the differences of times and institutions, helps us also to comprehend the influence of the noble character and powerful associations with which the monastic order has so long enriched the Church and the world. For the reality of that influence is incontestable. We are obliged to acknowledge, under pain of denying the best ascertained facts of history, those succors which the most difficult virtues and the most generous instincts of man, even in temporal affairs, have drawn from the bosom of the cloister, when the whole of Europe was covered with these asylums, open to the best intellects and highest hearts.

None can deny the ascendency which a solitude thus peopled exercised upon the age. None can deny that the world yielded the empire of virtue to those who intended to flee from the world, and that a simple monk might become, in the depths of his cell, like St. Jerome or St. Bernard, the centre of his epoch and the lever of its movements.

Let us then banish into the world of fiction that affirmation, so long repeated by foolish credulity, which made monasteries, and even religion itself, an asylum for indolence and incapacity, for misanthropy and pusillanimity, for feeble and melancholy temperaments, and for men who were no longer fit to serve society in the world. The very incomplete nar-

rative which I shall place before my readers, will, I venture to believe, suffice to prove that there has never been in any society, or at any epoch, men more energetic, more active, or more practical, than the monks of the middle ages.

We shall see how these *idlers* were associated during ten centuries with all the greatest events of the Church and of the world — always the first in labor and in combat. We shall see them issuing from the cloister to occupy pulpits and professors' chairs, to direct councils and conclaves, parliaments and crusades; and returning thither to raise monuments of art and science, to erect churches and produce books, which astonish and defy modern pride. We shall see that these dreamers were, above all, men in every meaning of the word, *viri* — men of heart and of will, with whom the most tender charity, and humility the most fervent, excluded neither perseverance, nor decision, nor boldness. They were masters of their will. Throughout the whole duration of the Christian ages, the cloister was the permanent nursery of great souls — that is to say, of that in which modern civilization most fails. And for that reason we repeat it without ceasing. The most brilliant and enduring glory of the monastic institution was the vigorous temper which it gave to Christian souls — the fertile and generous discipline which it imposed upon thousands of heroic hearts.

CHAPTER IV.

SERVICES RENDERED TO CHRISTIANITY BY THE MONKS.

Sine fictione didici, et sine invidia communico, et honestatem (illorum) non abscondo. — SAP. vii. 13.

THERE are some services and triumphs of a deep and silent kind which acquire their due honor only from posterity, and under the survey of history. Such are those which we have just described. But there are others more visible and more palpable, which seize at once upon the admiration and gratitude of contemporaries. When we inquire into the causes which have given to the religious orders, from their origin, and as long as their fervent spirit lasted, a part so important in the destinies of the Church, and so high a place in the

heart of all the Christian populations, it seems easy to recognize them in the two great functions common to all the orders and to all their branches — Prayer and Alms.

The first of all the services which the monks have conferred upon Christian society was that of praying — of praying much, of praying always for those whose prayers were evil or who prayed not at all. Christianity honored and esteemed in them, above all, that great force of intercession; these supplications, always active, always fervent; these torrents of prayers, poured forth unceasingly at the feet of God, who wills that we should supplicate Him. Thus they turned aside the wrath of God; they lightened the weight of the iniquities of the world; they re-established the equilibrium between the empire of heaven and the empire of earth. To the eyes of our fathers, it was this equilibrium between prayer and action, between the suppliant voices of humanity, timorous or grateful, and the incessant din of its passions and labors, which maintained the world in its place. In the maintenance of this equilibrium lay the strength and life of the middle ages; and when it is disturbed, all is disturbed in the soul, as in the world.

We will not inquire to what extent this disturbance exists in our modern world. It would be too sad to enumerate all the points of the globe where prayer is extinct, and where God listens for, without hearing, the voice of man. We know only that the universal need of prayer, and that ardent trust in its efficacy which characterized the middle ages, and which their detractors instance as a mark of childish simplicity, had been bequeathed to them by two antiquities, from whom they accepted the inheritance. The wisest of men has said, "The prayer of the humble pierceth the clouds: and till it come nigh, he will not be comforted; and will not depart till the Most High shall behold to judge righteously, and execute judgment."[1] Homer, who was nearly contemporary with Solomon, brightened his mythology with a light almost divine, when he made Phœnix say to Achilles, in that famous address which survives in all memories, "Even the gods permit themselves to be persuaded. Every day men, after having offended them, succeed in appeasing them with vows, with offerings, with sacrifices, libations, and prayers. The Prayers are daughters of the great Jupiter. Tottering, and

[1] "Oratio humiliantis se nubes penetrabit: et donec propinquet non consolabitur; et non discedet, donec Altissimus aspiciat." — *Ecclic.* xxxv. 17.

with a wrinkled brow, scarcely lifting their humble eyes, they hasten anxiously after the steps of Wrong. For Wrong is haughty and vigorous, and with a light step always precedes them. She hastens throughout the earth outraging men, but the humble Prayers follow her to heal the wounds which she has made. These daughters of Jupiter approach to him who respects and listens to them. They bring aid to him, they hearken in their turn, and grant his requests. But if a man, deaf to their desires, repulses them, they fly towards their father, and implore of him that Wrong may attach herself to the steps of that man, and rigorously avenge them." [2]

I cannot imagine a finer subject than the history of prayer — that is to say, the history of that which the creature has said to her Creator; the tale which should instruct us when, and wherefore, and how she places herself to recount to God her miseries and joys, her fears and her desires. If it was given to a human pen to write it, that history should be the history of the monks. For no men have known, as they did, how to wield that weapon of prayer, so well defined by the most illustrious bishop of our days, who has lately showed us how "the great witness of our weakness becomes, in the poor and feeble breast, a power redoubtable and irresistible to heaven itself: *Omnipotentia supplex.*" "God," continues that eloquent prelate, "in throwing us into the depths of this valley of misery, has willed to bestow upon our feebleness, upon our crimes even, the potency of prayer against Himself and His justice. When a man makes up his mind to pray, and when he prays well, his weakness itself becomes a strength. Prayer equals and surpasses sometimes the power of God. It triumphs over His will, His wrath, even over His justice." [3]

The Gospel has assured us of nothing more certain than this omnipotence of prayer. "If ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." [4] "Jesus Christ," says Bossuet, "expressly uses comparisons so extraordinary to show that all

[2] *Iliad*, ix. 497–512.

[3] M. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans — *First Sermon upon Prayer, Lent*, 1858.

[4] Matth. xxi. 21, 22; Mark xi. 23. It is said elsewhere: "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him" (Ps. cxlv. 19). And again: "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7). The *Fiat lux* is not more energetic.

is possible to him who prays." And he adds, "Behold here the prodigy of prodigies — man reclothed with the omnipotence of God!"[5]

Penetrated by this conviction, men of old neglected no means and no occasion of augmenting and maintaining the intensity of prayer in its highest form. Of old, as to-day, there were doubtless many Christians no better instructed how to pray than he who writes these lines. But all recognized the importance — the grandeur — the necessity of prayer. All admitted that the greatest blessing of Heaven to a nation, to a family, or to a soul, was to shed abroad upon it the spirit of prayer. All understood and all acknowledged that this flame of the heart should ascend to God by hands specially consecrated to that august mission. All passionately invoked that pledge of true fraternity. All thirsted for that alms; and, to obtain it, all turned towards the monks.

Thus, as long as the monks remained faithful to the spirit of their institution, their special mission, their first duty was to pray, not only for themselves, but for all. They had been the veteran and indefatigable champions of Christianity in the "holy and perpetual struggle of human prayer with the divine omnipotence."[6] Gathered together and constituted by rule for prayer in common, they were regarded with reason by the good sense of the Christian populations as a potency of intercession, instituted for the salvation of souls and of nations. Thanks to them, prayer existed in the character of an institution of permanent and public force, universally recognized and blessed by God and by man.

"Where goest thou?" said the Emperor Valens one day to a noble Persian, Aphraate, who had become a monk and missionary of the Nicean faith. "I go to pray for your empire," answered the monk.[7] In the midst of the pomps of the Byzantine Court, the most ancient and eloquent apologist of the order, St. John Chrysostom, declared in words which have not grown old, the sovereign efficacy of monastic prayer — "The beneficence of the monks is more than royal: the king, if he is good, can solace the hardships of the body; but the monk, by his prayers, frees souls from the tyranny of demons. A man who is struck by a spiritual affliction

[5] *Meditations on the Gospel*, part i., 39th day; part ii., 21st day.

[6] M. Dupanloup, l. c.

[7] "Imperator ad illum: Dic, inquit, quo vadis? Pro tuo, inquit, regno precaturus." — Theodoreti, *Ecclesiast. Histor.*, lib. iv., c. 26, t. iii. p. 284, edit. Cantabr.

passes before a king as before a body without life, and flies to the dwelling of the monks, as a peasant terrified by the sight of a wolf, takes refuge near the huntsman armed with a sword. What a sword is to the huntsman, prayer is to the monk. . . . Nor is it we alone who seek that shelter in our necessities; kings themselves invoke them in their dangers, — all, like mendicants fleeing, as in time of famine, to the houses of the rich." [8]

The words of St. John Chrysostom became a historical truth when the Christian royalty had replaced, at the head of new nations, the dishonored majesty of the Cæsars. During a thousand years, and among all the Catholic populations, we perceive what an enviable resource the princes find in the prayers of the monks, and how they glorify themselves by confidence in them. At the apotheosis of the feudal age, when the fleet of Philip Augustus, sailing towards the Holy Land, was assailed in the Sicilian seas by a horrible tempest, the king reanimated courage and confidence in the breasts of the sailors by reminding them what intercessors they had left upon the soil of their country. "It is midnight," he said to them; "it is the hour when the community of Clairvaux arise to sing matins. These holy monks never forget us — they are going to appease Christ — they go to pray for us; and their prayers will deliver us out of peril." [9]

A similar story is told of Charles V., a great emperor in spite of his errors, who, in the decline of the Catholic ages, fired by a last breath of that flame which had illuminated the Crusades, twice led his fleets and his armies against the infidels; first to victory, and afterwards to defeat, on those coasts of Africa where St. Louis died.

Like its chiefs, the entire mass of Christian society, during the whole period of the middle age, showed a profound confidence in the superior and invincible power of monastic prayer; and for this reason endowed with its best gifts those who interceded the best for it. All the generations repeated,

[8] S. Joan. Chrys., *Comparatio Regis et Monachi*, c. 4; cf. *Homel.* in *Matth.*, 68-72, et in *B. Philogomum*, c. 3, ed. Gaume, i., 607.

[9] "Jam matutinas Claravallensis ad horas
Concio surrexit: jam sancta oracula sancti,
Nostri haud immemores, in Christi laude resolvunt;
Quorum pacificat nobis oratio Christum,
Quorum nos tanto prece liberat ecce periclo.
Vix bene finierat, et jam fragor omnis et æstus,
Ventorumque cadit rabies, pulsisque tenebris,
Splendiflua radiant et luna et sidera luce."
Guillelm. Bretonis *Philippidos*, iv. 44.

one after the other, with an inexhaustible diversity in form, but with a steadfast unanimity in spirit, the formula used by St. Eloysius in 631, in his charter of donation to the monks of Solignac — I, your supplicant, in sight of the mass of my sins, and in hope of being delivered from them by God, give to you a little thing for a great, earth in exchange for heaven, that which passes away for that which is eternal." [10]

Thus, in receiving perishable riches from the hand of the faithful, the monks appeared to all to return the price of them in the unmeasured and unparalleled beneficence of prayer. By their mouth the voice of the Church rose without ceasing to heaven, drawing down the dew of divine benedictions. They inundated the whole soil of Christendom with a fertilizing moisture, inexhaustible source of grace and consolation. If it is true, as human wisdom has said, that he who works prays, may we not also believe that he who prays works, and that such work is the most fruitful and the most meritorious of all? "To occupy one's self with God," said St. Bernard, "is not to be idle — it is the occupation of all occupations." [11] It is this, then, which has justified and glorified in the eyes of Christian people all the orders, and specially those whom the world has comprehended least — those whom it has blamed for idle contemplations and prolonged prayers. How can we forget that it is precisely those who have merited and obtained the first place in the esteem of the Church and the gratitude of Christians? Has not St. Augustine even said, "The less a monk labors in any thing else but prayer, the more serviceable is he to men?" [12] To deny that, is it not to deny the Gospel? Did not God himself judge that cause and determine that question, when he took the part of Mary against Martha? [13]

But have the monks confined themselves to this solitary class of benefits? Has prayer been the only proof of solicitude, of affection, of gratitude, which they believed them-

[10] "Ego supplex vester, considerans molem peccatorum meorum, ut merear ab ipsis erui et a Domino sublevari, cedo vobis parva pro magnis, terrena pro cœlestibus, temporalia pro æternis." — Ap. Mabil., *Acta SS. O. B.*, t. ii., p. 1092.

[11] "Otiosum non est vacare Deo, sed negotium negotiorum omnium."

[12] "Monachi si non fidelium eleemosynis juventur, necesse est eos opere terreno, *quanto fidelium damno*, plus solito occupari." — S. Augustin., t. v., p. 3192, ed. Gaume.

[13] "Creator omnium Deus, per hoc quod Mariæ causam contra Martham assumpsit, evidentius patefecit." — Eugenii Papæ III., *Epist. ad Wibald. Corbeiens.*, in *Amplissima Collect.*, t. ii., p. 293.

selves able to give to their brothers, to their benefactors, to all the Christian community? Did they practise the giving of alms only under this purely spiritual form? No; all history witnesses to the contrary. All her monuments prove that the religious orders have practised a charity, active and palpable, such as had never been before them, and can never be exercised by other hands. They have displayed in that task all the intelligence and devotedness that is given to man. To that unfortunate multitude condemned to labor and privation, which constitutes the immense majority of the human race, the monks have always been prodigal, not only of bread, but at the same time of a sympathy efficacious and indefatigable — a nourishment of the soul not less important than that of the body.[14] What delicate cares, what tender foresight, what ingenious precautions, have been invented and practised during twelve centuries in these houses of prayer, which count among their dignitaries *les infirmiers des pauvres*, the nurses of the poor.[15] After having given an incessant and generous hospitality to the indigent crowd whom they never found too numerous,[16] after having edified and rejoiced them by the sight of their own peaceful and gentle life, they offered to them, besides, in time of war, a shelter, an asylum almost always respected by Catholic conquerors. After having given all that they could give on their own account, they inspired to marvels of generosity all those who loved and surrounded them. Their aspect alone seems to have been a permanent sermon to the profit of charity. Their habitual familiarity with the great has always benefited the

[14] To quote only one example among a thousand, we see, in the fifth century, St. Lié, Abbot of Mantenay, in Champagne, working with his own hands in the vineyard of the convent, carrying with him bread to distribute to the poor; and, whilst they ate it, preaching to them the fear and the love of God. — Desguerrois, *Histoire du Diocèse de Troyes*, p. 110.

[15] *Infirmarii pauperum.* There were such at Clairvaux to whom Thiémar of Juvencourt bequeathed in 1244 twelve deniers of annual income, payable at Martinmas. — *Extracts MSS.* made by D. Guitton *from the Archives of Clairvaux*, t. ii., fol. 79.

[16] They were no sooner escaped from proscription and ruin, than they resumed faithfully and universally the habits of their fathers. After the Cistercians or English Trappists of Melleray had been expelled from that abbey in 1831, some few from among them returned to England, and, favored by the religious liberty which reigned there, and by the munificence of Mr. Ambrose Lisle Philips, they were able to settle in an uncultivated region called Charnwood Forest, in the centre of a province in which monks had not been seen for three centuries. In this new monastery they have so well followed the traditions of their fathers, that, from the 1st of January 1845 to the 21st of April of the same year, they have given alms and hospitality to 6327 of the poor — and lived themselves only on charity!

small. If they were richly endowed by rich Christians, they in their turn endowed the poor with this purified wealth, and became thus the intermediary agents, delicate and indefatigable, from whose hands the alms once bestowed by the rich descended in perpetuity upon the poor.[17]

They have nobly and faithfully fulfilled that mission; and everywhere, even in the depths of their modern decadence, that supreme virtue of charity has specially distinguished them. In recent ages, the spirit of the world had everywhere invaded them, but had never been able to extirpate from their hearts the pious prodigality of their ancestors. The world had never succeeded in closing that door, from which has flowed forth upon the surrounding population the inexhaustible current of their benefits, so well symbolized by that wicket of Clairvaux, which, in the time of the monks, was called *La Donne*,[18] and which we can still see standing, though defaced and blocked up by the modern desecrators of the monastery of St. Bernard. No; the most enterprising traveller, the most unfriendly investigator, may search thoroughly, as we have done, through the ruins and traditions of the cloisters; he shall nowhere find a single monastery, however it may have been in its last days, which has not deserved the funeral oration, which we heard on visiting the remains of the Val-des-Choux, in Champagne, from the lips of an old woman contemporary with the monks, — "*It was a true convent of charity!*"

Our modern experience can, doubtless, easily conceive of means more intelligent and efficacious for relieving poverty,

[17] In March 1228 Elizabeth, lady of Chateauvillain, gave to the Cistercians of Clairvaux 620 livres de Provins in alms. They employed that sum in buying the great tithe of Morinvilliers, and consecrating the produce of it to distribute clothes and shoes every year, on the day of the Nativity of Our Lady, to eighty poor: *Quod unusquisque pauper quinque alnas de burello novo et sotulares novos . . . percipiet.* If this tithe produced more than was necessary for the number appointed, this surplus was to be employed exclusively in buying shoes for other poor, all for the good of the soul of the said lady. — *MSS.* Guitton, p. 421, from the copy of Langres. It would be easy to quote ten thousand analogous examples; we limit ourselves here to two or three of those which belong to the same Abbey of St. Bernard.

[18] Information furnished to the author in 1839 by the octogenarian Postel, who had been plumber of the ancient abbey, now transformed into a central police-office. Elisende, Countess of Bar-sur-Seine, gave in 1224 a *villa* to the abbey, with the intention of providing specially the alms which were bestowed at that gate. We find also a gate called *La Donne*, in the sad ruins of Echarlis, a Cistercian abbey, situated between Joigny and Courtenay. At least it still existed in 1846. At Aubrac, a monastic hospital of Rouergue, there was a gate called *De la Miche*, because they gave there a loaf of bread to all who came to ask it. — Bousquet, *L'Anc. Hôpital d'Aubrac*, p. 150.

and, above all, for preventing it; but how can we refrain from feeling and acknowledging gratitude to those who, during so long a time and with such an inexhaustible munificence, have accomplished all the duties of charity and Christian brotherhood, according to the measure of the light of their times? Besides, it was not solely by direct almsgiving that they served, and softened, and improved Christian society: it was still more by the honor which they rendered to poverty. This, as one of their most courageous and most regretted defenders among ourselves has already indicated,[19] is one of the principal advantages which the religious orders offer to the world, but it is also one of the aspects which is most repugnant to that spirit which would fain exclude God from modern society. The infidel loves not the poor — they remind him too much of a compensating justice, of a future in which every one shall be put in his proper place for eternity. He loves not those who regard them with kindness and sympathy. He knows well that the power of the priest is enrooted in the miseries of this life. He would willingly say with Barrère, "Almsgiving is an invention of sacerdotal vanity." He will never be able to eradicate the laws and necessities of afflicted nature; but we know that he has too often succeeded in securing a temporary triumph for that fatal system which seeks to make charity a humiliation,[20] alms an impost, and mendicity a crime; and by which the wicked rich man, more pitiless than he of the Gospel, will not even tolerate Lazarus upon the steps of his palace.

It is precisely the reverse of this that the religious orders have designed and accomplished. They were not satisfied simply to solace poverty; they honored it, consecrated it, adopted, espoused it, as that which was greatest and most royal here below. "The friendship of the poor," says St. Bernard, "constitutes us the friends of kings, but the love of poverty makes kings of us."[21] "We are the poor of Christ." *Pauperis Christi* is the enviable distinction of the monks: and to prove it the better, we see, when the great orders proceeding out of the Benedictine stock declined, an entirely new family of Religious arise, taking as the basis of

[19] Ch. Lenormant, *Des Associations Religieuses dans le Catholicisme*, Paris, 1845, p. 182.

[20] "Charity degrades and lowers those who receive it: beneficence does not so." — Extract of the Report after which the Boards of Charity continued to take the name of Boards of Beneficence in 1831, quoted in the *Annales de la Charité*, t. i., p. 597, Oct. 1845.

[21] "Amicitia pauperum regum amicos constituit: amor paupertatis reges." — S. Bern., ep. ciii.

their existence the voluntary exercise of poverty in its most repulsive aspect — that is to say, mendicity — and lasting until our own days under the name of *Mendicant Orders.* But long before this, and at all times, the monks knew well how to ennoble poverty. At the beginning they opened their ranks, and placed there, from the origin of their institution, slaves, serfs, and men of the extremest indigence, beside, and sometimes above, princes and nobles: for it is above all to the monastic condition that the fine expression of the Comte de Maistre upon the priesthood in ancient society applies: "It was neither above the last man of the State, nor beneath the first." [22]

And even to the poor who did not enter into their ranks, the monastic order presented a spectacle more adapted than any other to console them, and to elevate them in their own eyes — that of the poverty and voluntary humiliation of the great men of the earth who enrolled themselves in a crowd under the frock.[23] From the cradle of the institution, the fathers and the doctors of the Church had already ascertained the consolation which the poor experienced in seeing the sons of the greatest families clothed in these miserable monkish habits, which the most indigent would have disdained, and the laborer seated upon the same straw as the noble, or the general of an army: the one as free as the other in the same liberty, ennobled by the same nobility, serfs of the same servitude,[24] all blended in the holy equality of a voluntary humility.[25] During the whole course of the middle age, each year, each country, saw the perpetual renewal of that marvellous sacrifice of the most precious and envied possessions in the world, which their possessors immolated as they immolated themselves upon the altar of some obscure monastery. What lesson of resignation or humility is it possible to imagine for the poor, more eloquent than the sight of a queen, of the son of a king, or the nephew of an emperor, occupied by an effort of their own free choice in washing the plates, or oiling the shoes of the last peasant who had become a novice? [26] Now we can reckon by thousands, sovereigns,

[22] *Lettre inédite sur l'Instruction Publique en Russie*, Ami de la Réligion, t. cxix. p. 212.

[23] S. John Chrysost., in *Matthæum Homil.*, 68 et 69; ed. Gaume, t. vii. p. 761 et 773.

[24] *Advers. Oppug. Vit. Monast.*, lib. iii. t. i. p. 115.

[25] *Homil. in Matth.*, 62, p. 795.

[26] Let us quote, among many others of whom we shall speak later, St. Radegund, wife of Clotharius I.; Carloman, son of Pepin the Short; St.

dukes, counts, nobles of every order, and women of equal rank, who have given themselves to such vile offices, burying in the cloister a grandeur and a power, of which the diminished grandeurs, ephemeral and unconsidered, of our modern society can give no idea.[27] And even now, in our own days, wherever the cloister is permitted to survive or to be resuscitated, the same sacrifices, in proportion to our social inferiority, reappear — the same homage is rendered to poverty by the free will of the rich — so natural has the immolation of self become to a man who is governed by grace, and so inexhaustible is the treasure of consolation and respect which the Church, mother of all the religious orders, holds always open to the poorest among her children.

These first foundations laid, and these primary conditions of the true grandeur and supreme utility of the monks sufficiently indicated, let us pass to those services less brilliant, but also less disputed, which all agree in reckoning to their credit.

And if you would have us speak, in the first place, of the services which they have rendered to knowledge, we desire no better. We can never adequately tell how marvellously their life was adapted for study, for the ardent, active, and assiduous cultivation of letters. We can never sufficiently celebrate their touching modesty, their indefatigable researches, their penetration almost supernatural. We can never sufficiently regret the resources and the guarantees offered by these great centres of literature to the most elevated works of erudition, of history, of criticism, by that spirit of succession, that transmission of an intellectual and moral inheritance, which encouraged them to the longest and most thankless undertakings. Ah! who shall restore, not only to studious readers, but, above all, to authors, these vast and innumerable libraries, always keeping up to the day, and receiving the contemporary stream of all publications seriously useful, which, by that very fact, secured to these publications an utterance which they lack at the present

Frederick, cousin of the emperor St. Henry; St. Amedeus of Bonnevaux; Henri, brother of Louis the Fat, monk at Clairvaux.

[27] To measure the abyss which separates modern ranks and titles from those which were sacrificed in the middle age by embracing cloistral life, one has only to picture to one's self the difference between a count of to-day and a count of the twelfth century. And with the exception of ecclesiastical dignities alone, is it not very much the same with all titles and distinctions whatsoever?

time, and which they ask, like everything else, with anxious servility from the State? Let us add, that we can never regret sufficiently that disinterested devotion to science, apart from the self-satisfaction of vanity or any material advantage, which seems to have perished with them.[28]

But the service which we should most desire to secure ourselves from forgetting, and which the religious orders have rendered longest and with most success to the human mind, has been the purifying it by charity and subduing it by humility. They have thus converted a larger number of *savants* than they have made; and these were, of all conversions, the ones most highly considered in the middle age, which understood that of all pride the most dangerous and incurable is that of knowledge. We owe to a monk that saying which pronounces the eternal condemnation of intellectual pride — "To know, is to love."[29]

And let us once more celebrate all that they have done to cultivate and people the West. There we can say nothing that does not fall short of the truth. But every attempt at justice, however tardy and incomplete, will be at least a commencement of reparation towards those pretended sluggards, so long and so unjustly calumniated, and of legitimate protest against the odious ingratitude of which they have been victims. Who will be able to believe, hereafter, that the French people has permitted the men and the institutions to which three-eighths of the cities and towns of our country owe their existence, to be, in their name, ignominiously driven forth, pursued, and proscribed?[30] Let us unfold the map of France. Let us mention the names of towns actually existing. St. Brieuc, St. Malo, St. Leonard, St. Yrieix, St. Junien, St. Calais, St. Maixent, St. Servan, St. Valery, St. Riquier, St. Omer, St. Pol, St. Amand, St. Quentin, St. Venant, Bergues St. Vinox, St. Germain, St. Pourçain, St. Pardoux, St. Diey, St. Avold, St. Séver. All these bear the names of men; yes, and the names of saints, and, what is more, the names of monks! The names of men admirable, but now unknown,

[28] Let us recall, in connection with this, the noble homage which has been rendered in our day to the Benedictines of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, by one of the most illustrious of our modern scholars, by a man of whom it may be said with justice that he was worthy to belong to the body which he has so well comprehended and so much praised — M. Guérard, in his prolegomena of the *Polyptique d'Irminon*.

[29] Trithemius, Abbot of Spanheim.

[30] According to the calculation of P. Longueval, *Histoire de l'Eglise Gallicane*.

forgotten, disdained, even in the midst of these ungrateful towns, which owe their existence to the devoted labors of these ancient fanatics! Ask an actual inhabitant of one of these towns, it matters not which, who was the founder whose name and memory ought, we might suppose, to be identified with his earliest and most lasting impressions. He cannot answer. Yet the pagans themselves felt, acknowledged, and consecrated, a sweet and innoffensive respect for municipal traditions, for the genealogies of places, and that holy old age of cities, which Pliny, in his admirable epistle, loves to describe and identify with their dignity and liberty itself.[31]

But besides these, how many other flourishing towns are there everywhere, which, without bearing their origin written in their name, are not the less born in the shadow of the cloister, and under the protection of the paternal government of the monks! In France, for example: Guéret,[32] Pamiers,[33] Perpignan, Aurillac, Luçon, Tulle, St. Pons, St. Papoul, St. Girons, St. Lizier, Lescar, St. Denis, Redon, La Réole, Nantua, Sarlat, Abbeville, Domfront, Altkirch, Remiremont, Uzerches, Brives, St. Jean d'Angély, Gaillac, Mauriac, Brioude, St. Amand en Berry.[34] In Franche Comte alone: Lure, Luxeuil, the two Baumes, Faverney, Chateau-Chalon, Salins, Morteau, Mouthe, Montbenoît, and St. Claude, all founded by the monks, who have peopled the Jura and its hillsides. In Belgium: Ghent, Bruges, Mons, Maubeuge, Nivelle, Stavelot, Malmédy, Malines, Dunkirk, St. Trond, Soignies, Ninove, Renaix, Liége. In Germany: Fulda, Fritztar, Wissemburg, St. Goar, Werden, Hoxter, Gandersheim, Quedlinburg, Nord-

[31] "Reverere conditores deos, nomina deorum; reverere gloriam veterem et hanc ipsam senectutem, quæ in homine venerabilis, *in urbibus sacra est.* Sit apud te honor antiquitati, sit ingentibus factis, sit fabulis quoque: nihil ex cujusquam dignitate, nihil ex libertate, nihil etiam ex jactatione decerpseris." — C. Plinius sec., *Ad Maximum*, epist. viii. 24.

[32] Founded in 720 by the Abbot St. Pardoux, called at first the *Bourgaux-Moines.*

[33] Castle belonging to the Abbey of Fredelas, restored to the abbey by Roger II., Count of Foix, so that the village formed around the enclosure. It is from this fusion of the castle, the abbey, and the village, that the episcopal town of Pamiers has sprung. — We shall dispense with attaching an analogous note to each of the names which we shall quote.

[34] We quote only the chief places of the diocese, of the province, or of the district, and we leave unnoticed many other localities more or less important, which have had a monastery for their cradle, such as Cluny, Tournus, Mouzon, Paray-le-Monial, la Chaise-Dieu, Aigues-Mortes (founded by the Abbey of Psalmodi), &c. We refer to the learned work of M. Branche, *L'Auvergne au Moyen Age*, t. i. p. 439, for the curious enumeration of the thirty-six towns, market-towns, and villages of Auvergne, which owed their origin to the monks.

hausen, Lindau, Kempten, Munster. In England: Westminster, Bath, Reading, Dorchester, Whitby, Beverly, Ripon, Boston, Hexham, Evesham, St. Edmundsbury. St. Ives, St. Albans, St. Neots. In Switzerland: Schaffhausen, Soleure, St. Maurice, Appenzell, St. Gall, Seckingen, Glaris, Lausanne, Lucerne, and Zurich.

A tiresome enumeration, certainly; but how is it that these men of whom we speak were never tired of founding, of constructing, of building up, of making populous and fruitful? How is it that they have had the gift, the art, and the taste of creating and preserving, just as the modern instinct has too often that of destruction? Ah, yes; it is fatiguing to listen while we narrate and celebrate the works of those who build, as it is fatiguing to listen to the praises of virtue. Those who write and those who read the history of our days, need fear no such lassitude. But it is necessary to bear with it for a little, if we wish to have the slightest notion of monastic institutions.

And it is not only their incredible fertility which we must admire, but also the prodigious duration of that which they have brought forth. Oh, miracle of Christian greatness! it is in preaching the frailty of human things, the nothingness of all human productions; it is in demonstrating this by their example, by their retirement, by a steady sacrifice of rank, of family, of fortune, and of country, that they have succeeded in creating monuments and societies the most lasting which we have seen upon the earth, and which would seem able to brave indefinitely the action of time, if modern barbarism had not appeared to substitute itself in the place of time, as in that of right and justice. How many monasteries have lasted seven, eight, ten, sometimes even fourteen centuries;[35] that is to say, as long as the French royalty, and twice as long as the Roman republic!

We admire the works of the Romans: masters and tyrants of the world, they used the strength of a hundred different nations to create those constructions which archæologists and the learned have taught us to place above all others. But what then must we say of these poor solitaries?[36] They

[35] For example, Lerins, Marmoutier, St. Claude, all three prior to the French royalty; le Mont-Cassin, Luxeuil, Micy, and many others that will appear successively in our recital.

[36] "Those long and costly works," says the father of Mirabeau, "which are a sort of ambition and joy to bodies which regard themselves as perpetual, always slow to alienate, always strong to preserve, are beyond the powers of private individuals. It is the same with the buildings. The

have taken nothing from any one; but, without arms and without treasure, with the sole resource of spontaneous gifts, and thanks to the sweat of their own brow, they have covered the world with gigantic edifices, which are left to the pickaxe of civilized Vandals. They have achieved these works in the desert, without roads, without canals, without machinery, without any of the powerful instruments of modern industry, but with an inexhaustible patience and constancy, and at the same time with a taste and discernment of the conditions of art, which all the academies might envy them. We say more — there is no society in the world which might not go to their school, to learn at the same time the laws of beauty and those of duration.

CHAPTER V.

HAPPINESS IN THE CLOISTER.

Cio ch' io vedeva mi sembrava un riso
Dell' universo . . .
O gioia! o ineffabile allegrezza!
O vita intera d' amore e di pace!
O senza brama sicura richezza!
Luce intellettual piena d' amore,
Amor di vero ben pien di letizia,
Letizia che trascende ogni dolzore.
DANTE. *Parad.*, c. 27-30.

WHAT lasted most amidst the monks was not only their monuments and works, material and external: it was the interior edifice, the moral work, and, above all, the happiness which they enjoyed — that pure and profound happiness which reigned in them and around them.[1]

Yes, even in the bosom of that life which they despised,

same solidity, the same perfection. One of the churches of our abbey is known in our history by a famous episode, for 700 years; it is absolutely in the same state as it was then. Where are the private buildings erected at that time of which a stone is standing now?" — *L'Ami des Hommes*, 1758, tom. i. p. 25.

[1] I know no writer who has better comprehended and shown the happiness of monastic life, such as it is described and authenticated by ancient authors, than Mr. Kenelm Digby, in the tenth volume of the curious and instructive collection, entitled *Mores Catholici*, London, 1840. It has served to guide me in this attractive study, and has afforded me a pleasure which I would wish to share with all my readers by referring them to this valuable work.

and which they had offered as a sacrifice to God, God by a permanent miracle of His mercy has caused them always to find a joy and felicity unknown to other men. Yes, happiness, that rare and much desired gift, reigned without rival in those monasteries which were faithful to the rule of their founders, to the law of their existence. This is evident even in the charming names which the monks gave to the places of their retirement and penance — Bon-Lieu,[2] Beau-Lieu,[3] Clair-Lieu,[4] Joyeux-Lieu,[5] Cher-Lieu,[6] Chere-Ile,[7] Vaulx-la-Douce,[8] Les Delices,[9] Bon-Port,[10] Bon-Repos,[11] Bonne-Mont,[12] Val-Sainte,[13] Val-Benoite,[14] Val-de-Paix,[15] Val-d'Esperance,[16] Val-Bonne,[17] Val-Sauve,[18] Nid-d'Oiseau,[19] Font-Douce,[20] the Voie-du-Ciel,[21] the Porte-du-Ciel,[22] the Couronne-du-Ciel,[23] the Joug-Dieu,[24] the Part-Dieu,[25] the Paix-Dieu,[26] the Clarté-Dieu,[27] the Science-de-Dieu,[28] the Champ-de-Dieu,[29] the Lieu-de-Dieu,[30] the Port-Suave,[31] the Pré-Heureux,[32] the Pré-Bénit,[33]

[2] Good Place, of the order of Citeaux, in Limousin, and several others of the same name.

[3] Beautiful Place, Abbey of the Benedictines in Lorraine; of Citeaux, in England, in Rouergne, and elsewhere.

[4] Bright Place, Cistercians, in Lorraine.

[5] Joyous Place, Netley, the *Læto Loco*, in England.

[6] Dear Place, Cistercians, in Franche-Comté.

[7] Dear Island, *Cara Insula*, in Norway.

[8] Sweet Vale, Cistercians, in Champagne.

[9] The Delights, *Las Huelgas*, near Burgos, in Castile.

[10] Good Haven, Cistercians, in Normandy.

[11] Good Rest, Cistercians, in Brittany.

[12] Good Mountain, Cistercians, near Geneva.

[13] Holy Valley, Carthusian, in Switzerland.

[14] Blessed Valley, order of Citeaux, in the Lyonnais.

[15] Valley of Peace, Carthusian, in Switzerland.

[16] Valley of Hope, Carthusian, in Burgundy.

[17] Good Valley, Carthusian, in Languedoc; order of Citeaux, in Roussillon. There was besides a multitude of Good Vales and Good Valleys.

[18] Valley of Salvation, Citeaux, in Languedoc.

[19] Bird's Nest, Benedictines, in Anjou.

[20] Sweet Fountain, Benedictines, in Saintonge.

[21] The Way of Heaven, Carthusian, in the kingdom of Murcia.

[22] The Gate of Heaven, Carthusian, in the kingdom of Valencia.

[23] The Crown of Heaven, *Himmelskrone*, in Germany.

[24] God's Yoke, Benedictines, in Beaujolais.

[25] The Portion of God, Carthusian, in Switzerland.

[26] The Peace of God, order of Citeaux, in the neighborhood of Liege.

[27] The Brightness of God, Citeaux, in Tourraine.

[28] The Knowledge of God, Benedictines, in Lorraine, *Theolegium*.

[29] The Field of God, *Cultura Dei*, Benedictines of Maisa.

[30] The Place of God, *Dilo* for *Dei Locus*, Premontrès, near Joigny; *Loc Dieu*, Cistercians, in Rouergue and elsewhere.

[31] The Haven of Salvation, *Portus-Suavis*, corrupted to *Poursas* and *Poussay*, a noble chapter-house in Lorraine.

[32] The Happy Meadow, *Felix Pré*, near Givet.

[33] The Blessed Meadow, Cistercians, in La Marche.

the Sylve-Bénit,[34] the Régle,[35] the Reposoir,[36] the Reconfort,[37] L'Abondance,[38] La Joie.[39]

And this joy, so lasting and so lively, reigned in their hearts with all the greater warmth, in proportion to the austerity of their rule and the fidelity and completeness with which they observed it.[40] Their testimony is so unanimous in this respect that we are obliged either to believe it, or to believe that all which is holiest and most pure in the Church has, during successive centuries, directed the publication of a lie to humanity — a supposition so much the more absurd that monastic historians have never shunned the sad duty of recording the disorders and sufferings produced by any relaxation or contempt of their primitive constitution.

The indisputable evidence of this happiness shines from every page of the writings left to us by the monastic fathers, doctors, and historians. They passionately loved those monasteries which we consider prisons, and the life which they led in them.

"Toto corde meo te, Centula mater, amavi."[41]

It is with this exclamation of love that the beautiful and curious chronicle of the great Abbey of St. Riquier, in Ponthieu, is concluded; and five centuries later the Abbot Trithemius, one of the most celebrated historians of the Benedictines, made a similar exclamation on completing the first half of his celebrated annals of the beloved abbey where he had been trained: "Me sola Hirsaugia gaudet.[42]

[34] The Blessed Wood, Carthusian, in Dauphiny.

[35] The Rule, *Regula*, the Réole, Benedictines, in Aquitaine.

[36] The Resting-place, Carthusian, in Savoy.

[37] Consolation, Cistercian, in Nivernais.

[38] Abundance, Benedictine, in Savoy.

[39] Joy. Two abbeys bear this name, one in Champagne, the other in Brittany.

[40] This phenomenon, which has never failed to reappear at the origin of all religious orders, and to last as long as they have maintained their primitive fervor, presents itself anew amidst the difficulties of our modern life. The houses of La Trappe overflow with novices. On the contrary, during last century, the numerous abbeys where the Commende had destroyed all regular discipline, and in which life was almost as easy as in the world, knew not where to turn for recruits.

[41] Hariulfi *Chron. Centul.*, concluded in 1088, ap. Dachery, *Spicileg.*, v. ii. p. 356.

[42] P. 616 of the edition of St. Gall, 1690, in folio. — He says again in the dedication of his work, "Nimia dilectione Hirsaugensium devictus laborem hunc magnum libens suscepi;" and at the end of the second part, "Quanto Hirsaugianos amore diligam omnes, saltem laboribus meis communicatis ad loci honorem ostendam," t. ii. p. 692.

The echo of that joy is prolonged from century to century. The austere St. Peter Damien calls Cluny a "*garden of delights.*"[43] St. Bernard, the father of a hundred and sixty monasteries, which he had filled with the flower of his contemporaries, was never weary of repeating "Good Lord! what happiness Thou procurest for Thy poor!"[44] And Pierre de Blois, in leaving the Abbey of Croyland to return into his own country, stopped seven times to look back and contemplate again the place where he had been so happy.[45]

They loved these dear retreats so much that they reproached themselves for it, as we might reproach ourselves for loving too much the world and its fascinations; and when it was necessary to leave them, were obliged to recall to themselves their inviolable laws of Christian self-denial. "Oh, my cell!" said Alcuin, at the moment of leaving his cloister for the Court of Charlemagne, "sweet and well-beloved home, adieu for ever! I shall see no more the woods which surround thee with their interlacing branches and flowery verdure, nor thy fields full of wholesome and aromatic herbs, nor thy streams of fish, nor thy orchards, nor thy gardens where the lily mingles with the rose. I shall hear no more these birds who, like ourselves, sing matins and celebrate their Creator, in their fashion — nor those instructions of sweet and holy wisdom which sound in the same breath as the praises of the Most High, from lips and hearts always peaceful. Dear cell! I shall weep thee and regret thee always; but it is thus that everything changes and passes away, that night succeeds to day, winter to summer, storm to calm, weary age to ardent youth. And we, unhappy that we are! why do we love this fugitive world? It is Thou, O Christ! that puttest it to flight, that we may love Thee only; it is Thy love which alone should fill our hearts — Thee, our glory, our life, our salvation!"[46]

The happiness of the monks was natural, lasting, and profound. They found it, in the first place, in their work, in

[43] "Hortus deliciarum."

[44] "Deus bone! quanta pauperibus procuras solatia!"

[45] Petr. Blesensis *Contin.*, Ing. Croyland, ap. Gale, *Rer. Angt.*, *Script.*, v. i.

[46] "O mea cella, mihi habitatio dulcis amata,
Semper in æternum, O mea cella vale! . . .
Omne genus volucrum matutinas personat odas,
Atque Creatorem laudat in ore Deum." . . .
Alcuini *Opera*, v. ii. p. 456, edit. Frœben.

regular labor, sustained and sanctified by prayer;[47] then in all the details of a life so logical, so serene, and so free — free in the highest sense of the word. They found it, above all, in their enviable indifference to the necessities of domestic and material life, from which they were delivered, partly by the simplicity and poverty of their condition, and partly by the internal organization of the community, where all such solicitudes rested upon an individual, upon the abbot, who, assisted by the cellarer, undertook that charge for the love of God and the peace of his brethren.

Thus, in the midst of tranquil labor and a sweet uniformity, their life was prolonged and wrought out. But it was prolonged without being saddened. The longevity of the monks has always been remarkable. They knew the art of consoling and sanctifying old age, which, in the world — but especially in modern society, where a devouring activity, wholly material, seems to have become the first condition of happiness — is always so sad. In the cloister we see it not only cherished, honored, and listened to by younger men, but even so to speak, abolished and replaced by that youth of the heart which there preserved its existence through all the snows of age, as the prelude of the eternal youth of the life above.

They were, besides, profoundly impressed by the beauty of nature and the external world. They admired it as a temple of the goodness and light of God, as a reflection of His beauty. They have left us a proof of this, first in their choice of situation for the greater number of their monasteries, which are so remarkable for the singular suitableness and loveliness of their site; and also in the descriptions they have left of these favorite spots. We read the pictures drawn by St. Bruno in speaking of his Charterhouse of Calabria,[48] or by the anonymous monk who has described Clairvaux,[49] and we are impressed with the same delicate

[47] "Martyris Albani, sit tibi tuta quies!
Hic locus ætatis nostræ primordia novit,
Annos felices, lætitiæque dies! . . .
Militat hic Christo, noctuque diuque labori
Indulget sancto religiosa cohors."
— Lines of NECKHAM, Abbot of Cirencester in 1217, upon the abbey of St. Alban, ap. DIGBY, x. 545.

[48] In his letter to Raoul le Verd, Archbishop of Rheims, ap. MABILLON, *Ann. Bened.*, t. v., l. 68, *ad finem*.

[49] *Opp. S. Bernardi*, t. ii. — We should also refer to the beautiful observations on nature, animate and inanimate, of FROWIN, Abbot of Engelberg, in the thirteenth century, in his *Explication of the Lord's Prayer*, ap. Platt-

and profound appreciation of rural nature which has dictated to Virgil and Dante so many immortal verses. Like the feudal nobles, and indeed before them, the monks possessed that taste for the picturesque — for nature in her wild, abrupt, and varied aspects — which prevailed in the middle ages, and which we find, like the apparition of an ideal desire, in the landscapes of Hemling and Van Eyck, although these great painters lived only in the monotonous plains of Flanders. That taste disappeared later, with many other forms of the good and beautiful. The successors of the old monks, like those of the knights, abandoned as soon as they could the forests and mountains for the prosaic uniformity of towns and plains.[50] But the Religious of the early ages discovered and enjoyed all the poetry of nature.

And if inanimate nature was to them an abundant source of pleasure, they had a delight still more lively and elevated in the life of the heart, in the double love which burned in them — the love of their brethren inspired and consecrated by the love of God. The same monastic pens which have written treatises upon the beauty of the earth,[51] have written others still more eloquent upon Christian Friendship.[52] Love, these writers say, derives its life from knowledge and memory, which, in turn, take from it their charm.[53] But their example is better upon this point than the most eloquent of essays. What a charming book might be written on friendship in a cloister! What endearing traits, what delightful words might be collected from the time of that Spanish Abbot of the eighth century, who said, "I have left but one brother in the world, and how many brothers have I not found in the cloister!"[54] — down to those two nuns of the order of Fontevrault, one of whom having died before the other, appeared in a dream to her companion, and predicted her death, saying to her, "Understand, my love, that

ner, *Schweizer Blätter fur Wissenschaft und Kunst.*, Schwyz., 1859, t. i. p. 52.

[50] In the *Voyage Littéraire de Deux Bénédictins*, written at the commencement of the eighteenth century, the learned travellers designate constantly by the title of *site affreux* the sites of the ancient monasteries which they went to visit.

[51] *De Venustate Mundi*, by Denys le Chartreux.

[52] *De Amicitia Christiana et De Charitate Dei et Proximi*, tractatus duplex, by Pierre de Blois. Edit. in fol. de 1667, p. 497.

[53] "Ut amor ex scientia et memoria convalescat, et illa duo in amore dulcescant." — Petr. Bles. *Tract.*, i. cxi.

[54] "Unum fratrem dimisimus in sæculo: ecce quantos invenimus in monasterio." — *Contr. Elipandum*, l. ii., ap. Bulteau, ii. 265.

I am already in great peace; but I know not how to enter paradise without thee; prepare then and come at thy quickest, that we may present ourselves together before the Lord."[55]

And how indeed can we wonder at the development given in the cloister to these sweet emotions of virtuous souls? The Religious require and have a right to seek in these mutual sympathies a preservation against the hardships and disgusts of their condition, an aliment for the dreams and ardor of their youth. In seeking under the robe of their brethren for tender, disinterested, and faithful hearts, they obeyed at once the instructions of the divine law and the example of the God-man. The holy Scriptures, on which they meditated every day in the psalms and lessons they chanted in their choral liturgy, presented to them immortal examples of the affection which might exist among the elect. In the Gospels, and, above all, in that one, the author of which has not feared to call himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved," they saw the radiance of that tender and profound friendship which the Saviour of all men vouchsafed, during His short life here below, to some predestined souls. In the Old Testament they found its type in the delightful history of that Jonathan who loved David as his soul — of that David who loved Jonathan more than a mother can love or a woman be loved; in the vows, and tears, and kisses which sealed the union of the king's son with the son of the shepherd.[56] Everything invited and encouraged them to choose one or several souls as the intimate companions of their life, and to consecrate that choice by an affection free as their vocation, pure as their profession, tender and generous as their youth. Thus initiated in the stainless pleasure of a union of hearts, they could again, with the sage, recognize, in the fidelity of these voluntary ties, "a medicine for life and for immortality."[57]

But where shall we find among ourselves a pen sufficiently

[55] "Notum tibi facio, dilecta. . . . Prepara ergo te et veni quantocius ut simul Domino præsentemur." — HERBERTI *De Miraculis*, l. ii. c. 43, apud CHIFFLET, *Genus Illustre S. Bernardi*.

[56] "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." "And they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded." "We have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord." "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been to me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

[57] "Amicus fidelis medicamentum vitæ et immortalitatis." — *Ecclic.* vi. 16.

pure and delicate to record these annals of real love? The most charming poet of our generation, though by his own errors the most unhappy, seems to have caught a glimpse of it, when, out of the midst of strains so strangely and dangerously beautiful, he permitted to escape him such lines as the following, a singular testimony to the high and generous inspirations which he knew too well how to interpret, and too often how to stifle: —

"Monastic arches, silent cloisters, lone
And sombre cells, ye know what loving is.
These are your chill cold naves, your pavements, stones
Which burning lips faint over when they kiss.
. . . . . .
With your baptismal waters bathe their face;
Tell them a moment how their knees must wear
The cold sepulchral stones before the grace,
Of loving as you loved, they hope to share.
Vast was the love which from your chalices,
Mysterious monks! with a full heart ye drew:
Ye loved with ardent souls! oh, happy lot for you!" [58]

Should we not say that the hand which has traced these lines had been turning over the pages of that immortal code of divine love written by St. Bernard in his discourse upon the *Song of Songs*, where he speaks with such passionate earnestness that universal language of love, "which is understood only by those who love;" [59] where he celebrates the nuptials of the soul with God, and depicts in lines of light that bride who loves only for the sake of loving and being loved, who finds in love alone all that she seeks, all that she desires, all that she hopes, who no longer fears anything, nor doubts the love which she inspires any more than that which she feels? [60] Human tenderness, however eloquent, has never inspired accents more passionate or profound. And to prove how little the divine love, thus understood and practised, tends to exclude or chill the love of man for man, never was human eloquence more touching or more sincere, than in that immortal elegy by which Bernard suddenly interrupts the course of his sermons upon the Canticles of Solomon, to la-

[58] Alfred de Musset, *Rolla.*

[59] "Amor ubique loquitur; et si quis horum quæ leguntur cupit adipisci notitiam, amet. . . . Lingua amoris ei qui non amat, barbara erit." — *Serm.* 79 *in Cantic.*

[60] "Quæ amat, amat, et aliud novit nihil. . . . Ipse (amor) meritum, ipse præmium est sibi. . . . Fructus ejus, usus ejus. Amo, quia amo: amo ut amem. Sponsæ res et spes unus est amor." — *Sermo* 83. "Nihil dilectæ timendum. Paveant quæ non amant. . . . Ego vero amans, amari me dubitare non possum, non plus quam amare." — *Sermo* 84.

ment a lost brother snatched by death from the cloister, where they had lived in so much harmony and happiness. We all know that famous apostrophe — "Flow, flow, my tears, so eager to flow! — he who prevented your flowing is here no more! . . . It is not he who is dead, it is I who now live only to die. Why, oh why have we loved, and why have we lost each other?" [61] It is thus that natural tenderness and legitimate affections vindicate their rights in the hearts of the saints, and penetrate there by means of that which Bernard himself calls the broad and sweet wound of love. [62] Thus this great disciple of Jesus loved and wept for him whom he loved, even here below, as Jesus loved and wept in Lazarus a mortal friend. "Behold how He loved him!" [63]

Without always exalting itself so high, the mutual affection which reigned among the monks flowed as a mighty stream through the annals of the cloister. It has left its trace even in the *formulas*, collected with care by modern erudition, and which, deposited in the archives of the different monasteries, served as models of the familiar epistles exchanged between communities, superiors, and even simple monks. We find here and there, in the superscription of these letters as well as in their text, those impulses of the heart which charm and refresh the patient investigator of the past. "To such an one, his humble fellow-countryman, who would embrace him with the wings of a sincere and indissoluble charity, sends salutations in the sweetness of true love." [64] And again — "I adjure you, by your gentleness, visit us often by letters and messages, that the long distance which separates us may not triumph over those who are united by the love of Christ." "To the faithful friend," says another of these forgotten rubrics, the barbarous Latin of which has doubtless served more than one loving and delicate soul. "Let us aspire, dearest brother, to be satisfied by the fruits of wisdom, and bedewed by the waters of the divine fountain, that the same and sole paradise may receive us, and

[61] "Exite, exite, lacrymæ jampridem cupientes: exite quia is qui vobis meatum obstringerit, commeavit. . . . Vivo ut vivens moriar, et hoc dixerim vitam! . . . Cur, quæso, aut amavimus, aut amisimus nos?" — *Sermo* 26. See also the admirable discourse of St. Bernard on the death of his friend Humbert, a monk of Clairvaux, t. i. p. 1066, ed. Mabillon.

[62] "Grande et suave vulnus amoris."

[63] John xi. 36.

[64] "Indissolubili vinculo individuæ sincerrimæque caritatis alis amplectendo illi, ille humilis terrigena in dulcedine vere caritatis salutem." — *Formules Inédites*, published from two MSS. of Munich and Copenhagen, by Eug. de Rozière, 1859, No. 68. — Cfr. Nos. 34 and 71.

open to our enjoyment the freedom of the celestial kingdom. . . . If thou wilt, it shall be well for us to be divided by vast territories, and withdrawn from each other under different skies — our tribulations are the same, and our prayers shall strengthen us by the union of our souls." Sometimes verse, faintly outlined, is mingled with the prose, to repeat the perpetual burden of all that correspondence. "Remember me — I always remember you; I owe to you, and I give you, all the love that is in my heart." [65]

But with how much greater force than in these anonymous formulas, with what constancy and impetuosity does that inexhaustible tenderness overflow in the authentic letters of the great monks, the collections of which certainly form one of the most precious monuments for the study of the past, as well as for that of the human heart. The more celebrated and powerful they are, the holier are they and the more they love. The correspondence of the most illustrious, of Geoffrey de Vendome, of Pierre le Venerable, and of St. Bernard, give incontestable proofs of this at every page, and the pleasure of our researches will be proportioned to the frequency with which we encounter them upon our road.

But even at the present moment we may appropriately quote certain lines which portray the heart of St. Anselm, who lived, loved, and was happy for sixty years in his Norman Abbey of Bec, before he was condemned to the glorious contests of his episcopate. "Souls, well beloved of my soul," he wrote to two of his near relatives whom he wished to draw to Bec, "my eyes ardently desire to behold you; my arms expand to embrace you; my lips sigh for your kisses; all the life that remains to me is consumed with waiting for you. I hope in praying, and I pray in hoping — come and taste how gracious the Lord is — you cannot fully know it while you find sweetness in the world. I would not deceive you; first, because I love you, and further, because I have experience of what I say. Let us be monks together, that now and always we may be but one flesh, one blood, and one soul. My soul is welded to your souls; you can rend it,

[65] "Non sejungant longa terrarum spacia, quos Christi nectit amor. . . . Age jam, o meus carissime frater, . . . ut in regni celestis libertate . . . gaudere valeamus. . . . Si vis, terrarum spatio divisi sumus atque sequestramur intervallo et celi inequali climate dirimemus, pari tamen tribulationum depremimur (sic) face.

Esto mei memores, sum vestri: debeo vobis
Et voveo totum quicquid amore."

— E. De Rozière, *Formules de S. Gall.*, Nos. 39, 41, 58.

but not separate it from you — neither can you draw it into the world. You must needs then live with it here, or break it; but God preserve you from doing so much harm to a poor soul which has never harmed you, and which loves you. Oh, how my love consumes me! how it compels me to burst forth into words! — but no word satisfies it. How many things would it write! but neither the paper nor the time are sufficient. Speak Thou to them, oh good Jesus! Speak to their hearts, Thou who alone canst make them understand. Bid them leave all and follow Thee. Separate me not from those to whom Thou has linked me by all the ties of blood and of the heart. Be my witness, Lord, Thou and those tears which flow while I write!" [66]

The same earnestness is evident in his letters to the friends whom he had acquired in the cloister, and from whom a temporary absence separated him. He writes to the young Lanfranc — "'Far from the eyes, far from the heart,' say the vulgar. Believe nothing of it; if it was so, the farther you were distant from me, the cooler my love for you would be; whilst, on the contrary, the less I can enjoy your presence, the more the desire of that pleasure burns in the soul of your friend." [67] Gondulph, destined like himself to serve the Church in the midst of storms, was his most intimate friend. "To Gondulph, Anselm," he wrote to him: "I put no other or longer salutations at the head of my letter, because I can say nothing more to him whom I love. All who know Gondulph and Anselm know well what this means, and how much love is understood in these two names." And again: "How could I forget thee? Can a man forget one who is placed like a seal upon his heart? In thy silence I know that thou lovest me; and thou also, when I say nothing, thou knowest that I love thee. Not only have I no doubt of thee, but I answer for thee that thou art sure of me. What can my letter tell thee that thou knowest not already, thou who art my second soul? Go into the secret place of thy heart, look there at thy love for me, and thou shalt see mine for thee." [68]

[66] "Animæ dilectissimæ animæ meæ . . . concupiscunt oculi mei vultus vestros, extendunt se brachia mea ad amplexus vestros; anhelat ad oscula vestra os meum. . . . Dic tu, o bone Jesu, cordibus eorum. . . . Domine, tu testis es interius, et lacrymæ quæ me hoc scribente fluunt, testes sunt exterius." — *Epist.* ii. 28.

[67] *Epist.* i. 66.

[68] "Quisquis enim bene novit Gondulfum et Anselmum, cum legit: Gondulfo Anselmus, non ignorat quid subaudiatur, vel quantus subintelligatur affectus." — *Ep.* i. 7. "Qualiter namque obliviscar tui? Te silente ego

To another of his friends, Gislebert, he says: "Thou knewest how much I love thee, but I knew it not. He who has separated us has alone instructed me how dear to me thou wert. No, I knew not before the experience of thy absence how sweet it was to have thee, how bitter to have thee not. Thou hast another friend whom thou hast loved as much or more than me to console thee, but I have no longer thee — thee! thee! thou understandest? and nothing to replace thee. Thou hast thy consolers, but I have only my wound. Those who rejoice in the possession of thee may perhaps be offended by what I say. Ah! let them content themselves with their joy, and permit me to weep for him whom I ever love."[69]

Nor could death, any more than absence, extinguish in the heart of the monk those flames of holy love. And when these gentle ties were broken, the dying carried with him a certainty that he should not be forgotten, and the survivor believed in the invisible duration of his tenderness, thanks to those prayers for souls, incessant and obligatory, which were identified with all the monastic habits — thanks to that devotion for the dead which received in a monastery its final and perpetual sanction.[70] They were not content even with common and permanent prayer for the dead of each isolated monastery. By degrees, vast spiritual associations were formed among communities of the same order and the same country, with the aim of relieving by their reciprocal prayers the defunct members of each house. Rolls of parchment, transmitted by special messengers from cloister to cloister, received the names of those who had "emigrated," according to the consecrated expression, from "this terrestrial light to Christ," and served the purpose of a check and register to prevent defalcation in that voluntary impost of prayer which our cenobites solicited in advance for themselves or for their friends.[71]

novi quia diligis me et me tacente scis quia amo te. Tu mihi conscius es quia ego non dubito de te; et ego tibi testis sum quia tu certus es de me." — *Ep.* i. 4. "Sed quid te docebit epistola mea quod ignores, o tu altera anima? Intra in cubiculum cordis tui." — *Ep.* i. 14.

[69] "Et quidem tu sciebas erga te dilectionem meam; sed utique ego ipse nesciebam eam. Qui nos scidit ab invicem, ille me docuit quantum te diligerem." — *Ep.* i. 75.

[70] It is known that the Festival of the Commemoration of the Departed was instituted by St. Odilon, Abbot of Cluny, in 998.

[71] "De hac luce migravit, ut credimus, ad Christum. Deprecor vos omnes . . . ut me familiariter habeatis, maxime in sacris orationibus, et quando dies obitus mei vobis notus fuerit, misericorditer de me facere dignemini.

Here let us return to Anselm. When he was elected prior of Bec, a young monk called Osbern, jealous of his promotion, was seized with hatred towards him, and demonstrated it violently. Anselm devoted himself to this young man, gained upon him by degrees by his indulgence, traced for him the path of austerities, made him a saint, watched him night and day during his last sickness, and received his last sigh. Afterwards he still continued to love the soul of him who had been his enemy; and, not content with saying mass for him every day during a year, he hastened from monastery to monastery soliciting others to join him. "I beg of you," he wrote to Gondulph, "of you and of all my friends, to pray for Osbern. His soul is my soul. All that you do for him during my life, I shall accept as if you had done it for me after my death, and when I die you shall leave me there. . . . I conjure you for the third time, remember me, and forget not the soul of my well-beloved Osbern. And if I ask too much of you, then forget me and remember him. . . . All those who surround me, and who love thee as I do, desire to enter into that secret chamber of thy memory where I am always: I am well pleased that they should have places near me there; but the soul of my Osbern, ah! I beseech thee, give it no other place than in my bosom." [72]

Great is the history of nations — their revolutions, their destinies, their mission, their glory, their punishments, their heroes, their dynasties, their battles; the tale is great, noble, and fruitful. But how much more fruitful and vast is the history of souls! Of what importance, after all, are his ancestors and his descendants to a man? Of what importance to an atom is the orbit in which it moves? That which does concern him is to love, to be loved; and, during this brief life, to know that he is the being dear above all things to another being. "It appears manifest," says Bossuet, with his solemn gravity, "that *man is the delight of man*." [73] There is

. . . Nomina fratrum defunctorum libenti animo suscipite . . . et ad vicina monasteria dirigite." — *Formules de S. Gall.*, E. DE ROZIÈRE, Nos. 29 and 31. Compare the excellent work on this subject by M. LEOPOLD DELISLE, in the *Bibl. de l'Ecole des Chartes*, t. iii. 2d series.

[72] "Anima ejus anima mea est. Accipiam igitur in illo vivus quicquid ab amicitia poteram sperare defunctus, ut sint otiosi, me defuncto. . . . Precor et precor et precor, memento mei et ne obliviscaris animæ Osberni dilecti mei. Quod si te nimis videar onerare, mei oblivisce et illius memorare." — *Ep.* i. 4. "Eos interiori cubiculo memoriæ tuæ ibi, ubi ego assiduus assideo . . . colloca mecum in circuitu meo: sed animam Osberni mei, rogo, chare mi, illam non nisi in sinu meo." — *Ep.* i. 7.

[73] Sermon for the Circumcision.

no real key of the heart but love. Love is the law of the heart. It is this which moves its most secret inclinations and energies."[74] The solitary sufferings of that love, its emotions perpetually renewed, its crises, its revolutions, its confidence, and its enthusiasm — all that great world which palpitates within the narrow enclosure of a man's life, of a heart which loves, ah! this is the most beautiful and absorbing of histories; this is the tale which endures and moves us all to the depths. Of all the scanty number of immortal pages which float upon the ocean of time, almost all are filled with this theme.

But let us see here the glory and unparalleled force of religion — it is this, that in resolving all social problems, and interpreting all historical revolutions, she retains everywhere, and above all, "the key of our hearts." She has a balm for all our sufferings, and an object for all our tendernesses. She knows how to discipline passion without weakening it; better than drying up our too precious tears, she makes them flow from a source purified for ever by an eternal object. She replaces the twilight of our transitory dreams by the radiant and enchanting serenity of an undying light. She encircles our hearts with that flame, the rays of which shine through infinitude. She has originated and consecrated the supreme triumph of love. She crowns the most tender and powerful passions by something sweeter and stronger still, the happiness and the glory of sacrificing them to God. It is in monasteries that this science of true happiness and real love has been longest taught and practised. We have seen that religion does not interdict either the warm impulses of affection, or the endearing accents of the most penetrating sympathy to souls united in God. Let us ever listen to the sounds which are audible in that sacred silence: they will reveal, perhaps, some sweet and touching mystery of the history of souls. Let us give ear to the gentle and perpetual murmur of that fountain which every cloister once enclosed — an emblem and an echo of the spring from which gushed such inexhaustible love.

Therefore our monks were happy, and happy by love. They loved God, and they loved each other in Him, with that love which is strong as death. If we would seek the natural consequence, the general condition, and the best proof of all his happiness, we recognize it without difficulty in that external

[74] Sermon for Pentecost. — *Id.* for the Annunciation.

and internal peace, which was the predominant characteristic of their existence. A sweet and holy peace which was the radiant conquest, the inalienable patrimony of those monks who were worthy of their name, and of which no one else, in an equal degree, has ever possessed the secret or the understanding!

St. Benedict, the greatest of monastic legislators, has received no nobler title from a grateful posterity than that of *Founder of Peace.*

"Ipse fundator placidæ quietis." [75]

We are, said St. Bernard, the *Order of the Peaceful.*[76] He had the most perfect right to say so: in the midst of that belligerent world of the middle ages, entirely organized for war, the monks formed a vast army of soldiers of peace, and that was, indeed, the title which they gave themselves: *Deo et paci militantibus.*[77]

See, therefore, how happiness, according to the divine promise, accompanies the ministers of peace. "To the counsellors of peace is joy." [78] It is not enough even to say happiness; we should say gayety, *hilaritas,* that gayety which Fulbert of Charters, describing its union with the simplicity of the monks, called angelical.[79]

Of all the erroneous conceptions of Religious life, there is not one more absurd than that which would persuade us to regard it as a life sad and melancholy. History demonstrates precisely the contrary. Let us cease then to waste our pity upon all these *cloistered victims* of both sexes, phantoms created by false history and false philosophy, which serve as a pretext for the prejudices and the violence by which so many souls, made for a better life, and so many real victims of the most cruel oppression, are retained in the world. A truce to all these declamations of the wretchedness of being condemned to a uniform life, to unavoidable duties, and unvaried occupations. There is not one of the objections made against

[75] Alfano, Monk of Mont Cassin, and Archbishop of Salerno, quoted by Giesebrecht, *De Litterar. Stud. ap. Italos,* p. 48.

[76] *De Conversione,* c. 21.

[77] This is the title of the letter of Wibald, Abbot of Corvey, in the twelfth century, to the monks of Hastières, in Belgium. In the epitaphs of the monks, it is the eulogium which recurs oftenest: "*Pacificus, tranquilla pace serenus;*" "*Æmulus hic pacis;*" "*Fraternæ pacis amicus.*" See numerous examples collected by Digby, t. x. c. l.

[78] Prov. xii. 20.

[79] "Angelica hilaritas cum monastica simplicitate." — Fulb. Carnot., Ep. 66.

the life of the cloister which does not apply with quite as much force to conjugal life. The Christian, the true sage, knows well that perpetual obligations, voluntarily undertaken, never render a man permanently unhappy. He knows, on the contrary, that they are indispensable to order and peace in his soul. That which tortures and consumes, is neither obligation nor duty; it is instability, agitation, the fever of change. Ah! when the spirit of the world penetrated the cloister, and ended by stealing it away from the spirit of God — when it had introduced there the *commende*, the principle of individual property, indolence, coldness, all that corruption which lay usurpation sowed everywhere throughout the field, which she took upon herself to confiscate — then, doubtless, that which had been a rare and guilty exception, became an abuse too habitual and general. Then, doubtless, there was a crowd of vocations false or compulsory, and of bitter sorrows, stifled under the frock or the veil. But whilst it was permitted to the monastic orders to flourish in freedom under the wing of the Church, sheltered from secular invasions, melancholy was unknown, or at least appeared only now and then like a malady, the rareness of which renders it more frightful. "*They had no sadness*,"[80] is the testimony given of them in the fourth century, by the first of their apologists; "*they wage war with the devil as if they were playing*."[81]

We see it unceasingly specified among the qualities of the most pious abbots and exemplary monks, that they were gay, joyous, amusing, loving to laugh, *jocundus*, *facetus*. These expressions overflow above all from the pen of Orderic Vital, who, speaking of himself in his long and precious history, tells us — "I have borne for forty-two years, with happiness, the sweet yoke of the Lord."[82] St. Anselm, that great and irreproachable monk, certainly knew what he said when he thus challenged the secular clergy of his time: "You who believe that it is easier to live religiously under the habit of a priest than to bear the burden of monastic life, behold and see with what lightness that burden is borne by Christians of each sex, of every age and condition, who fill the entire

[80] "Οὐδεν γὰρ ἔχουσι λυπηρόν." — S. Joann. Chrysost., *in Matth. Homil.* 69, ed. Gaume, vii. 770.

[81] Literally, *dancing*, ὥσπερ χορεύοντες, *quasi choreas agentes*. — *Ibid.*

[82] "Sincero monachorum conventui fœdere indissolubili sociatus, annos xlii. jam leve jugum Domini gratanter bajulavi." — Order. Vit., lib. v. p. 307.

world with their songs of joy."[83] And six centuries after him, the Abbot de Rancé, who has been so often instanced to us as a type of monkish melancholy and suffering, opposed to the calumnies with which his Religious were then assailed, their conjunction of gayety and edifying charity.[84]

But they made no monopoly of that peace and joy which was their inheritance; they distributed it with full hands to all who surrounded them—to all who gave them permission—everywhere. They evidenced it, they preached it, they bestowed it upon all who approached them. "The monks," said the great Archbishop of Constantinople, whom we here quote for the last time,—"the monks are like the lighthouses placed on high mountains, which draw all navigators to the tranquil port which they light—those who contemplate them fear no more either darkness or shipwreck."[85]

The happiness enjoyed by the people who were subjects or neighbors of the religious orders when they themselves were free and regular, in a fact, the evidence of which is declared by history, and consecrated in the memory of all nations.[86] No institution was ever more popular, no masters were more beloved. Doubtless they have had their enemies and persecutors in all times, as the Church and virtue itself has had. But while Europe remained faithful, these were but a minority disavowed by general opinion. And even when that minority became master of the world, it succeeded in destroying the monastic orders only by violence and proscription. Wherever the orders, still free from lay corruption,[87] have perished, it has been amid the grief and lasting

[83] "Consideret per totum mundum quanta hilaritate utrique sexui, omni ætate et omni genere hominum, sit pondus illud cantabile."—S. Anselm, Epist. ii. 12.

[84] "You might have said to that incredulous person that, in addition to 1500 to 2000 poor, whom, as I have often counted, they supported by public donations in the dear years, they also sustain privately, by monthly pensions, all the families in the neighborhood who are unable to work; that they receive four thousand guests; that they nourish and maintain eighty monks; and all for an income of 8000 or 9000 livres at the most: and you might ask him to point out to you ten households, each with the same income, who do anything approaching to what those sluggards, as he calls them, do with a *gayety* and an edification of which you would wish that he might be a spectator."—*Letter from the Abbot de Rancé to the Abbot Nicaise.*

[85] S. Joan. Chrys., *Homil.* 59, *ad Popul. Antiochenum.* He recurs constantly to this simile in his several writings. Cf. *Adv. Oppugn. Vit. Monast.*, lib. iii. t. i. p. 114. *Hom. in Epist. ad Timoth.*, 14, t. xi. p. 576, ed. Gaume.

[86] We have quoted a thousand times the German proverb: "Unter dem Krummstab ist es gut wohnen" (It is good to live under the crosier).

[87] It will be shown further on that we do not include in this judgment the

regret of the population which depended on them. And if elsewhere, as in France, where the epoch of their ruin was contemporary with the ruin of faith in the whole nation, their fall has been seen with indifference, at least it has never been called for by popular vengeance or antipathy.

The spoliations and crimes of which they were the victims, have been the work of princes or assemblies who plumed themselves upon their scorn for the affections as for the faith of the vulgar, and have inspired only regret and alarm to the people of the country, or to those inferior and indigent classes whose necessities and passions awake so much just solicitude at the present time. This testimony has been borne by all who have sincerely studied the history of their destruction, even among their adversaries.[88] Above all, it should be rendered to them by the author of these pages, who has visited, in many countries, the site of nearly two hundred monasteries, and who has collected, wherever any contemporaries of monastic charity survived, the expression of their gratitude and their regret. And how could they fail to exercise that influence, — they "whose trade was doing disinterested good?"[89] How could they fail to be loved, they who loved so well? It was not only for their alms, for their practical generosity and hospitality, that they reigned thus in all hearts; it was for their benign and paternal sympathy, their active and cordial interest in the people; it was still more by their constant and active solicitude for the salvation and happiness of all suffering souls.[90]

monasteries morally ruined by the *commende*, or any other abuse, which succumbed in 1790; but that it refers to the destruction of those which had remained faithful to their rule in England, Germany, Sweden, and recently in Spain and Switzerland, where the people armed themselves to defend them.

[88] Let us quote, from among a thousand, a Portuguese author, a great partisan of the system which has ruined and inthralled the Church of his country, and who has recognized, but too late, the inconvenience of the indiscriminate suppression of monasteries. "We," says he, "who have assisted at the suppression of part of the ancient monasteries of Minho, and who have seen the tears of the people, who had always found there succor in their illnesses and bread in their old age, — we know not whether those tears were deceitful, but we know well that they gave an express contradiction to the theories of politicians who wrote far from the countries, in the silence of their cabinets, or in the midst of the noise of great towns." — *O Panorama, jornal litterario*, No. 27, Lisboa, 1837.

[89] Wordsworth.

[90] "Mitis erat cunctis, suavis, pius. . . .
Quen mœstum vidit, quem tristem, quemque dolentem
Affatu dulci mœrentia pectora mulcens."

This fragment, from the epitaph of an abbot of Gembloux, Herluin (ap. Dachery, *Spicileg.*, t. ii.), applies to almost all the abbots who are known to us in history.

"Weep with the unhappy,"[91] said one of the patriarchs of the monastic order, St. Columba; and it was a precept which they never disobeyed. Nowhere has the human race in its joys and sorrows found sympathies more living and productive than under the frock of the monk. A life of solitude, mortification, and celibacy, far from extinguishing in the heart of the monk the love of his neighbor, augumented its intensity, and redoubled by purifying it. We have proof of this in their innumerable writings, in their animated chronicles, in all that remains to us of them. Their writers employed, to designate that disposition which was native to monastic souls, a special term, that of *benignitas* — that is to say, benevolence elevated and purified by piety; *benignitas*, a word entirely Christian, entirely monastic, and as difficult to translate as the other two habitual virtues of the cloister, *simplicitas*[92] and *hilaritas*.

Their doors were always open, not only to the poor and exiled, but to all souls fatigued with life, bowed down under the weight of their faults, or simply enamoured of study and silence. To all these different guests the monk offered his peace and shared it with them.

Thus there was not a necessity, moral or material, for which the monks, who, of all the benefactors of humanity, were certainly the most generous, the most ingenious, the most amiable, disinterested, and persevering, had not attempted to provide. From thence resulted much happiness imperceptible in the annals of history, but distilled in abundance into the heart of the Christian people during all the period of monastic fervor; from thence came that invincible peace, that luminous serenity, which held sway over so many souls — even in the midst of the most stormy epochs of the Middle Age.

Who knows, besides, how much the mere sight of their worship, the pomp of their ceremonies so majestic and solemn, and the very sound of their chants, delighted the surrounding population? These were during many centuries the favorite spectacles, the *fêtes* most sought after by the poor and by the country people, who resorted thither in crowds, and always found a place. Those who were prosperous in the world — the great, and rich, and even stran-

[91] "Pro misero miserans lacrymas effunde sodali." — S. Columban *Carmen Monastichon*, ap. Canisius, *Thesaur.*, t. ii. p. 749.

[92] "Hic jacet in tumba simplex fidelisque columba." — *Epitaph of an abbot of St. Victor, in* 1383, ap. Digby, t. x. p. 441.

gers — found a heartfelt enjoyment in contemplating close at hand the peaceable course of monastic life, though they did not cease to navigate for themselves the agitated waves of the world; they loved to quench their thirst in that pure and fresh stream. The mere sight of the monks, who were at the same time so austere and so happy, often sufficed to determine remarkable conversions;[93] and always renewed in the heart salutary thoughts of eternity. The most beautiful souls, the highest intelligences, have yielded to that attraction, and have eloquently confessed it. True philosophy has rendered to it, by the mouth of Leibnitz, a generous homage.[94] True poetry has appreciated its singular and unconquerable charm. At a time when more than one symptom of approaching decadence obscured the horizon, Petrarch spoke of monastic solitude like a Father of Vallombrosa or of the Chartreuse,[95] and Tasso has never been more happily inspired than in his sonnet addressed to the order of St. Benedict, the touching melody of which comes opportunely to interrupt this poor prose: —[96]

"Nobil porto del mondo e di fortuna,
Di sacri e dolci studj alta quiete,
Silenzi amici, e vaghe chiostre, e liete!
Laddove e l' ora, e l' ombra occulta, e bruna:
Templi, ove a suon di squilla altri s'aduna,
Degni viepiù d' archi, e teatri, e miete,
In cui talor si sparge, e 'n cui si miete
Quel che ne puo nudrir l' almà digiuna.
Usci di voi chi, fra gli acuti scogli,
Della nave di Pietro antica e carca,
Tenne l' alto governo in gran tempesta.
A voi, deposte l' arme e i feri orgogli,
Venner gli Augusti: e 'n voi s' ha pace onesta,
Non pur sicura: e quindi al ciel si varca."[97]

Beside that great Italian and Catholic poet, we quote the

[93] For example, that of Guibert, of Nogent, so well related by himself, *Vita propria*.

[94] "He who is ignorant of their services or who despises them," says Leibnitz, speaking of the monks, "has only a narrow and vulgar idea of virtue, and stupidly believes that he has fulfilled all his obligations towards God by some habitual practices accomplished with that coldness which excludes zeal and love."

[95] See his treatise *De Vita Solitaria*, especially Chapter viii. of Book 2, which begins thus: "O vere vita pacifica, cœlestique simillima. O vita melior super vitas. . . . Vita reformatrix animæ. . . . Vita philosophica, poetica, sancta, prophetica," page 256, ed. 1581.

[96] Among the modern poets, no one has celebrated with more feeling and truth the glory of the Monastic Orders, nor more eloquently deplored their ruin, than the English Wordsworth.

[97] Tasso, *Rime Sacre e Morali*, Sonn. 5.

master of English prose, the Protestant Johnson, whose masculine genius appreciated, even in the eighteenth century, the holy beauty of monastic institutions. "I never read," said he, "of a hermit, but in imagination I kiss his feet: never of a monastery, but I fall on my knees and kiss the pavement."

Thus, then, by acknowledgment of the most competent and impartial judges, the much abused monks had found the secret of the two rarest things in the world — happiness and duration. They had discovered the art of reconciling greatness of soul with humility, a tranquillized heart with an ardent mind, freedom and fulness of action with a minute and absolute submission to rule, ineffaceable traditions with an absence of all hereditary property, activity with peace, joy with labor, social life with solitude, the greatest moral force with the greatest material feebleness. And this marvellous contrast — this strange union of the most diverse qualities and conditions — they had been able to maintain during a thousand years, through all the frailties of human things, and despite a thousand abuses, a thousand causes of corruption, decadence, and ruin. They would have lasted still if tyrants, sophists, and rhetoricians, under pretext of curing the sick man whom they hated, had not slaughtered him to enrich themselves with his spoil.

Now all has disappeared: that fountain of the purest and most inoffensive happiness to be found upon earth is exhausted; that generous stream which flowed through ages in waves of incessant and fruitful intercession is dried up.[98] We might say a vast interdict had been cast upon the world. That melodious voice which the monks raised day and night from the bosom of a thousand sanctuaries to assuage the anger of Heaven and draw down peace and joy into Christian hearts, is silenced among us.[99] Those fair and dear churches, where so many generations of our fathers resorted to seek consolation, courage, and strength to strive against the evils of life, are fallen. Those cloisters which offered a safe and noble asylum to all the arts and all the sciences —

[98] "It was as though the Kaiser had stopped the fountains of one of the Lombard rivers. . . . That Carthusian world of peaceful sanctity, of king-protecting intercession, of penitence and benediction, of heaven realized below, was signed away, swept from the earth by a written name!" — Faber, *Signs and Thought in Foreign Churches*, p. 165, in reference to the suppression of the Carthusians of Pavia by Joseph II.

[99] "Dulcis cantilena divini cultus, quæ corda fidelium mitigat ac lætificat, conticuit." — Order. Vital., t. xii. lib. xiii. p. 908, ed Duchesne.

where all the miseries of man were solaced — where the hungry were always satisfied, the naked clothed, the ignorant enlightened, exist no more except as ruins, stained by a thousand ignoble profanations. Those sylvan heights, those holy mountains, those elevated places, where thoughts of God had their habitation — "He dwelleth on high" (Isaiah xxxiii. 5) — which heretofore cast upon the world a light so pure, and shadows so fresh and salutary, resemble only the unwooded summits which we encounter here and there, transformed by the devastating axe into arid and naked rocks, where a blade of grass or a green leaf reappears no more. In vain the sun gilds them with his fruitful rays — in vain the dews of heaven suffuse them. The hand of the destroyer has been there: burned, dried up, condemned to an eternal sterility, they subsist no longer but as monuments of ruin and folly.

Often, however, nature has had pity upon these ruins, which testify to the pitiless ingratitude of men. She has thrown around these monuments of their rapacity decorations perpetually renewed — she has veiled their shame under the inexhaustible riches of her abundant verdure — she has wrapped them, as in a shroud, with her immortal robe of ivy and eglantine, with creeping plants and wild flowers. She attracts to them thus, even from the indifferent, a sympathetic and attentive gaze. And where the climate, or the still more cruel hand of man, has not permitted that struggle of nature against scorn and forgetfulness, sometimes a plaintive legend survives and resists them, like a last protest. Thus amid the ruins of the Abbey of Kilconnell, in the western extremity of Ireland, the Irish peasants, themselves spoiled and dishonored for so many centuries, still show in the pavement of the ruined church certain long lines and little hollows, furrowed in the stone, according to their tale, by those drops of fire, the burning tears of the poor monks when they were expelled forever from their well-beloved sanctuary.

CHAPTER VI.

CHARGES AGAINST THE MONKS — MONASTIC WEALTH.

Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? — 1 Cor. ix. 7.

But whilst we abandon ourselves, with tender and melancholy respect, to the contemplation of that extinguished grandeur, the world still retains in its recollection the clamors which, during three centuries, have assailed the monastic order, and does not cease to celebrate its fall.

"Monk!" said Voltaire, "what is that profession of thine? It is that of having none, of engaging one's self by an inviolable oath to be a fool and a slave, and to live at the expense of others."[1] That definition had been universally accepted and applauded in the kingdom which was the cradle of the order of Cluny and of the congregation of St. Maur, in the country of Benedict d'Aniane, of St. Bernard, of Peter the Venerable, of Mabillon, and of Rancé. It had crossed the Rhine; and the Emperor of that Germany which was converted by the monk Boniface, his Apostolic Majesty Joseph II., wrote in October, 1781: "The principles of monasticism, from Pacôme to our own days, are entirely contrary to the light of reason." The French Revolution, and the secularization imposed by Bonaparte on Germany, gave effect to these oracles of the modern world. The instructions of Madame Roland, who wrote — "Let us then sell the ecclesiastical possessions — we shall never be freed of these ferocious beasts till we have destroyed their dens,"[2] having been punctually executed, we might have hoped that hate should have been quenched by proscription.

But it is not so. The cruel passions which have buried that long-enduring institution under the ruins of the past,

[1] *Dialogues.*

[2] Autograph letter to Lanthenas, 30th June, 1790. Three years later, the representative Andrew Dumont wrote as follows to the Convention of the department of Somme, where he was on a mission: — "Citizen colleagues, new captures! certain infamous bigots of priests lived in a heap of hay in the ci-devant Abbey of Gard; their long beards proved how inveterate was their aristocracy. These three evil creatures, these monks, have been discovered. . . . These three monsters have gone to the dungeon to await their sentence." LeGard was an abbey of the order of Citeaux, in Picardy, between Amiens and Abbeville, situated on the Somme.

live still among us. Steadfast and implacable, they watch around that which they believe to be a tomb, fearing some day the resurrection of their victim; and at the least appearance of a renewed life, they pursue even his memory with trite and vulgar calumnies.

The diatribes which have been drawn from too celebrated pens by a culpable complaisance for these victorious prejudices, are expounded and aggravated by the unknown voices which bellow in the shade, and swell the echoes of falsehood and of hate. Whilst one denounces to his hundred thousand readers "the beatified aberrations and ignorance of monkish asceticism,"[3] others repeat, in emulation, that "the monks and the nuns are but sluggards, fattened at the expense of the people."[4] This is said and resaid every day in spite of the many monuments, old and new, of historical science, which prove beyond refutation how generally the people have been fattened at the expense of the monks.

These commonplaces of ignorant and triumphant wickedness have taken their place as a final judgment in the mind of the crowd. All obsolete and repugnant as they are, let us listen to them and recall them, if it were only to confirm ourselves in a horror of falsehood and injustice.

Let us take up, in the first place, at the head of these slanders of misled reason, the grand reproach for which it will shortly begin to blush, but which the sophists of the last two centuries employed with so much success as to diminish the credit of the monks with statesmen. They were vowed to celibacy, and celibacy put a troublesome limit to the progress of population. This was then the most universal and incontestable of their crimes.[5] We know what

[3] M. DE LAMARTINE, *Histoire de la Restauration*, livre xv. § 8.

[4] *Le Semeur*, philosophical and literary journal, 13th October, 1847. Let us recall, in connection with this subject, that, in his *Manuel Du Droit Public Ecclésiastique Français*, published in 1844, page 209, M. Dupin, then as now Attorney-General of the Court of Cassation, has attempted to employ as a weapon against the religious congregations and associations not recognized by the modern law, the suit instituted against what he calls the *Religious Congregation* of Bacchanals at Rome, in the year 186 before Jesus Christ, which was, according to the epitome of book 39th of Livy, quoted by the learned jurisconsult, *scelerum omnium seminarium*. In a recent debate in the French Senate, in May 1860, he has not blushed to repeat this contemptible parallel.

[5] This reproach goes very far back. Colbert, in his memoir of the 15th May, 1665, says to Louis XIV.: "The monks and nuns not only hold themselves relieved from work which would advance the common good, but even deprive the public of all the children whom they might produce, to serve in necessary and useful duties." — *Revue Rétrospective*, 2d series, t. iv. pp. 257, 258.

has become of that reproach nowadays. It is almost as if God had waited till the lie had achieved its triumph, to overwhelm it with confusion. That population which the religious orders were accused of stemming up in its source, has become too often the most cruel of embarrassments, and the world is covered with doctors and economists, licensed to seek the best means of arresting its progress.

Who does not know to what monstrous consequences the heirs of these accusers of monastic celibacy have come? There is here an abyss of error and of darkness which it is not our business to fathom, but into which, at least, we do not fear to follow that illustrious archbishop, who has sealed by martyrdom the constant moderation of his opinions, and the noble independence of his life. "An antichristian science," said M. Affre, "had encouraged an unlimited development of population. Overwhelmed now by this novel increase, she sets herself to calculate how much misery and oppression is necessary to restrain it. All other barriers proving too feeble, science has conceived a moral restraint as favorable to vice, as Christian continence is favorable to virtue. Never cease to contemplate these deplorable errors which God has permitted in order to render your faith more dear and venerable to you. St. Paul has said to a small number of the elect, 'In that which concerns virgins I give you only advice.' Heavenly souls, sufficiently courageous to follow him, have been blessed by Jesus Christ: but the Saviour required to add, 'Far from all being able to raise themselves to that perfection, all are not even able to comprehend it.' The Church authorizes none to embrace it, but after long and severe trials. A science, altogether material, announces to men that this voluntary chastity was a crime against society, because it deprived the state of citizens. In vain innumerable virgins, angels of innocence and goodness, have consoled the poor, have formed the Christian life in the mind of childhood, have appeased Heaven by their prayers and by their touching expiations, and have offered sublime examples to all; in vain legions of virgin apostles have bestowed new sentiments of peace and charity upon the Catholic nations, and brought unknown virtues to life in their bosom; an impure philosophy comes to proclaim that these sacred ties, the source of so many benefits, must be replaced by bonds less perfect; and now she says to the beings whom she has freed from all moral laws, intoxicated with sensual sensations and heaped together in one place,

without distinction of sex, Thou shalt not form a family. She says this precisely to those whose passions she has rendered most precocious, and to whom a legitimate union is most necessary for resisting seductions which might pervert angels.

"We scarcely dare to point out to you a maxim still more perverse. Other sophists have comprehended the impossibility of such a restraint; but in giving that up, they have dared to counsel Christian spouses to cheat the desire of nature, and to throw back into nothingness those beings whom God calls to existence.

"Oh, Saviour God! who has sanctified the love of marriage by bestowing on it indissolubility, unity, and primitive purity, I bless Thee. I bless Thee, also, for having consecrated the vows of virgins, and filled with grace a life which raises itself above the earth, only to draw down the blessings of Heaven. I bless Thee for having found even in the outrages of an impious philosophy the justification of Thy holy Gospel. Since she has disclosed her infamous doctrines, Thou art avenged but too completely of her blasphemies against Thy angelic counsels."[6]

However, in the eyes of modern authorities the monks were not only guilty of abstracting themselves from the *duty of reproduction*, and of refusing to give life to others; their own life was useless to the world and their kind.

At this present time, and in view of the results, each more unlooked for than the other, of recent historical studies, there is not one, perhaps, among men who pretend to any authority whatever in the realm of knowledge, who would put his name to such an assertion. But we know too well how it is still repeated in the lower classes of literature; it counts for something in that false coin of knowledge which is current among the immense majority of the so-called enlightened men of our days. We send back these blind sages, with confidence, to the study of the monuments which they ignore, of the books which they have never opened. We defy them to find a country, an age, or a society, in which the direct and positive practical utility of the monks has not been written in incontestable lines, as long as their hands were free, and before the *commende* (which was the crime of kings, not of monks) had come to perpetuate enervation and disorder in their ranks. We say nothing further here of the supreme utility,

[6] *Instruction Pastorale de Mgr l' Archevêque de Paris* (Mgr Denis Affre), upon the connection of charity with faith; March, 1843.

in the eyes of every consistent Christian, of prayer, and a life hidden in God; nothing of that powerful and constant intercession, always hovering between heaven and earth, for the salvation and the peace of men; nothing of the immense and beneficent influence of monastic peace upon men of war and of business, of its virtue upon the passions, of its solitude upon the age. No, we descend from that sphere of too lofty reality to place ourselves on a level with those who keep their eyes always cast down towards the earth, always absorbed in whatever is to pass away or to bring profit. We invite them to instance in the annals of the world, a body, an institution, any organization whatever, which can bear even a distant comparison with the monasteries which were, for ten centuries and more, the schools, the archives, the libraries, the hostelries, the studios, the penitentiaries, and the hospitals of Christian society. And when they refer us to those times, in which the religious orders estranged themselves almost entirely from the political, literary, and external life of the world, and which, for the very reason that they were thus concentrated more and more in themselves, should have drawn to them the indulgent toleration of the masters of the new world, we answer with the great writer, who, upon so many points, has reopened to us the gates of historic truth: "Whoever is able to subdue human will without degrading human nature, has rendered to society a service beyond price, in freeing government from the care of watching over these men, of employing them, and above all, of paying them. There has never been a happier idea than that of uniting pacific citizens, who labored, prayed, studied, wrote, cultivated the ground, *and asked nothing from those in authority.*"[7]

Modern governments ought to comprehend this, although none have yet confessed it; and to those who assure them that the modest and peaceable independence of the monk, and that satisfaction with his lot, which it will soon be impossible to find, are the fruits of superstition and fanaticism, more than one statesman might be tempted to respond: Restore us this tree which bears fruits of such a lost species!

"The whole aim of man is to be happy," says Bossuet; "place happiness where it ought to be, and it is the source of all good; but the source of all evil is to place it where it ought not to be." But, here are myriads of men, who, from

[7] Count de Maistre, *Du Pape*, p. 436.

age to age, succeed each other in declaring themselves happy and content with their lot. And we proclaim them useless! As if the world could have anything more useful than happiness; as if universal happiness was not exclusively composed of that of individuals; as if each individual who calls and believes himself happy, and who is so, without taking anything from his neighbor, or envying any man, whoever he may be, was not in himself alone an inappreciable element of social prosperity! No matter, all this happiness must disappear; it must be proscribed and sacrificed; it must be extended upon the Procrustean bed of a pretended public utility, defined, modified, travestied by emulous theorists, as pitiless as they are powerless, but insane enough to believe themselves invested with the right of constraining human nature, and of exercising sovereign rule over the vocations, the inclinations, and the preferences of their fellow-creatures. Be it well understood, besides, that this insupportable tyranny applies itself only to good, never to evil; and that it imposes upon virtue, upon prayer, upon holy retirement, such a yoke and fetters as no enlightened legislator has ever dreamt of imposing upon vice, idleness, or dissipation.

But they persist, and add, The monks were indolent. Is it so indeed! Such, then, was the vice of those men who, by unanimous admission, have with their own hands cleared the soil of half the Western world, and whose laborious vigils have preserved to us all the works of ancient literature and the monuments of ten centuries of our history. The monks indolent! But of all the monks, the most ancient and the most numerous were the Benedictines; and that name has become, even in vulgar speech, the type and the synonyme of serious, modest, and indefatigable labor. The monks indolent! But who, then, if not the monks, have borne the burden and heat of the day in all the missions to the East and to America, in the persecuted Christendoms of Europe, in the work of redeeming captives, in the strife against heresies and immorality, and even in the spiritual administration of the most Catholic nations? It would be well to see those who have been most lavish of this reproach upon the monks, confined for a single day to that life of incessant fatigue, of disgusts, of privations, of vigils, and journeys, which is the portion of the least of the missionaries or the most obscure of the confessors which the monastic orders furnish to the Church!

The indolence of the monks! Can it be possible that this

refers to those monks, few in number, who devote themselves exclusively to a life of contemplation? — to the anchorites, these emulators of the Fathers of the desert, who, having learnt to content themselves with necessaries more scanty even than those required by the most miserable laborer, certainly believe themselves entitled to give to their soul the time, strength, and nourishment, of which, by a superhuman courage, they have deprived their flesh?

We have already answered, that for every Christian, prayer is the most legitimate and useful labor; to contest that truth is not simply to deny the principles of the Monastic Order, but the fundamental basis of religion altogether. We shall add that always, and everywhere, the cenobites who have been most faithful to the rules of mortification and to the spiritual life, are precisely those who, like the Trappists of our own day, have obtained the most marvellous results in agriculture, or, like the Jesuits, are the most devoted to education, to the sciences, and to all mental labors.

The reproach of indolence can then be addressed, with an appearance of justice, only to those among the monks — Benedictines or others — who, having inherited the possessions with which the industry of their predecessors or the generosity of the faithful had endowed their monasteries, lived there in ease and leisure.

We must indeed admit that, especially in the later times, their primitive strength being lamentably lessened by the abuses of the *commende* (which shall be discussed further on without reserve), indolence did glide into more than one monastery. But that was a crime which should be laid to their charge before God, and not before men. Besides, such a reproach cannot be raised without re-descending with all its weight upon its authors, nor even without menacing the entire mass of civil society. Have all these severe critics examined themselves on this score? Are they all confident of escaping the accusation which they lavish upon others? The politicians, the philosophers, the men of letters, who declaim against the idleness of the monks, are they always such laborious and productive citizens? Have not they too already beheld, in tumult beneath them, a greedy crowd which throws upon them in their turn the epithet of idle? What right has the world to account their fortune and their leisure a crime to the monks more than to all the other rich and free proprietors of our age or of any age? Whatever the abuses of the Monastic Order might be — and again we repeat

that we shall conceal none of them — they were specially responsible for them towards the Church. They could, without much fear, defy the lay society of all ages to show many rich men more active and more usefully occupied than they. Up to the time of our recent Socialist follies, the world has not assumed the right of demanding from him who reaps the harvests of a field long labored and fertilized, the same energy as was necessary to him who first brought it under cultivation. On the contrary, all societies and legislatures have endeavored to stimulate human activity by promising to parents that their industry, sweat, and fatigue, should result in the leisure, ease, and well-being of their offspring. It is by this means alone that the desire and pursuit of property is free from the charge of selfishness. By what right do we apply a different rule to the monks? The peace and comfort which they enjoyed even in the midst of their spiritual decadence was the product of the labors and sweat of their spiritual ancestors — the most legitimate and unassailable inheritance that ever existed. The Church alone could and ought to stigmatize here that capital sin which religion everywhere interdicts. We say without fear that this, which is called *indolence* among the monks, is simply that which is called *leisure* among the wealthy; society has no more right to punish one than the other with civil death and the confiscation of his goods.

But further, we are told, the monks were not only rich — they were too rich! Yes, certainly, there were communities of extreme opulence, and this was one great cause of decay and corruption: I admit it freely. The Church, remaining faithful to the intentions of the founders, had there a legitimate cause of intervention for the better division and more useful employment of monastic wealth. But was this a reason for its appropriation to the profit of the State? No, a thousand times, no! And who can venture to raise such a complaint from the midst of modern society, in which wealth, henceforward to be the only distinction and sole evidence of social importance, has naturally become the object of covetousness less restrained, and more rapacious desire than at any other epoch? Too rich! but what human authority is entitled to fix the limit at which excessive wealth commences, or to trace boundaries to property legitimately acquired? It is religion alone which can distinguish here the necessary from the superfluous, and determine on a fit destination for that superfluity; and yet, by a revolting wicked-

ness, it is against herself only, against the sacred weakness of the Church, that men have systematically violated the rights of property. The Church alone had a right to say that the monks had too much wealth; we can say only that they were rich,[8] and we can justify their fortune in two words, by its origin and its employment.

As for its employment, even in the midst of the most palpable abuses and complete enervation, that can still be concentrated in one word, charity! — a charity which has never been questioned and never equalled. Upon this point, before refuting the objectors, let us wait for what they advance.

But this fortune is specially justified by its origin. We can affirm, without fear, that never property had an origin as legitimate, as holy, and as inviolable as the monastic possessions. They proceeded entirely from the generosity of the faithful, fructified by the labor of the monks. It is the only property, taken altogether, which has had its origin in the most noble act of man; the gift, the pure and free gift of love, gratitude, or faith.[9]

"Can it chance to be," says a celebrated statesman of our days, little suspected of partiality or complaisance for the religious orders — "can it chance to be that you intend to regulate the employment of my goods to such an extent that I shall not be able to use them in the manner most agreeable to me? After having accorded to me the physical enjoyment of property, is it possible that you can refuse me the moral

[8] Further, to be just, much that has been said of the wealth of religious orders in general should be corrected. The greater majority of these orders, at the time of their suppression, were, on the contrary, poor: the *mendicant* orders, the most numerous of all, lived, as their name indicates, by alms and endowments limited enough. The regular clergy, such as the Théatins, Barnabites, &c., founded since the sixteenth century, and the secular congregations, had scarcely any territorial endowments. There were none truly rich but the ancient orders of monks, properly so called, such as the Benedictines and Cistercians; and even among these there were monasteries extremely poor from the first, and impoverished, especially by the *commende*. In the bosom of these same orders the reformed congregations signalized themselves by the honorable moderation of their incomes. After the inquiry into the property of the congregatien of St. Maur, made in 1682 by the famous lieutenant-general of police La Reynie, every Benedictine returned the income of 437 livres and some sous; this was still less than the modest 600 livres to which we have remarked every Jesuit confined himself. There is not at this time an undergraduate or unmarried supernumerary who does not claim from Government and society a salary two or three times greater.

[9] Unjust donations, injurious or excessive, might sometimes occur, but nothing is more rare; we could not quote one example out of a thousand. Sometimes, indeed, the heirs, whose consent was always requisite in the Middle Ages for the validity of donations which concerned territorial domains, refused their compliance: and this opposition involved the nullity of the act.

enjoyments, the most noble, the most exquisite, the most useful of all? What then! odious legislator, you will permit me to consume, to dissipate, to destroy my possessions, but you will not permit me to bestow them on whom I please! For me, for myself alone, see the melancholy end which you assign to the painful efforts of my life? Thus you would debase, you would disenchant, you would arrest my labors. . . . To give is the noblest mode of using property. It is, I repeat, the moral enjoyment added to the physical." [10]

But the proprietors of old were not moved only by the idea of enjoyment. They believed themselves obliged to protect their property before God and man, purifying it by sacrifice. Christians of all ranks and times have indeed given, and given much to the monasteries; and while they enriched one, they did not cease to nourish and raise up others. That munificence was neither unreflecting nor blind; it was, on the contrary, the fruit of a calculation, but of a calculation most just and noble. The Catholic nations repeated to the monks during twelve centuries, those beautiful and simple words by which, in the baseness of the Lower Empire, St. John the Almoner endowed the two monasteries founded by him at Alexandria. "I shall provide, after God, for the necessities of your bodies: and do you provide for the necessities of my soul." [11] Five hundred years later, at the other extremity of Christian society, it is thus that one of the great feudal chiefs expresses in two lines the motives of feudal munificence — "I, William, Count of Poitou, and Duke of all Aquitaine, transfer from my hand, into the hand of St. Peter of Cluny, this Church which, God helping, I have freed and snatched from lay usurpation: — and I make this gift because

[10] He adds — "For the rest, judge of the fact by the consequences. I said to you elsewhere, that if every man threw himself upon his neighbor to rob him of his food, which the latter replaced at the cost of another, society would soon be a mere theatre of pillage instead of work. Suppose, on the contrary, that every man who has much, gave to him who had not enough, the world would become a theatre of benevolence: do not fear, however, that man will go too far in this path, and render his neighbor idle by burdening himself with his work. The benevolence which exists in the heart of man is barely on a level with human miseries, and it is well if incessant discourses on morality and religion succeed in equalling the remedy to the evil, the balm to the wound." — Thiers, *De la Propriété*, book i. c. 8, "That the power of bestowal is one of the necessary rights of property, 1848." The author is so much the less to be suspected that he only sees in monastic life "Christian suicide substituted for Pagan suicide." — Book ii. c. 6.

[11] "Ego post Deum utilitatem vestram corporalem procurabo, vos autem spiritualis habetote meæ curam salutis." — Ap. Mabill., *Præf.* iv. *sæc. Bened.*, n. 66.

I remember my sins, and because I would that God might forget them." [12]

In bestowing gifts upon the monks, the Christians of old gave, in the first place, to God, and next to the poor — for we all know that the monks were the almoners of Christianity. They gave up their superfluous wealth, and sometimes even necessaries, in obedience to the two most exalted motives of life — the salvation of the soul and the consolation of the poor — the love of God and the love of man.

If we would retrace the history of the most generous instincts and pure emotions which have ever moved the human heart, it could be done with ease; we need only transcribe the preambles of the acts of foundation and donation which have established monastic property.[13] There, all the affections and all the sorrows of man appear in turn to be sanctified, purified, and made immortal; devotion towards God, towards His mother, towards His saints; adoration and humility, repentance and gratitude; love, conjugal, filial, and paternal, the love of one's neighbor in all the inexhaustible variety of its inspirations, and above all, the desire of contributing to the salvation of those who have been beloved on earth, and of rejoining them in heaven. In public and solemn acts, designed to remove all suspicion of fraudulent or occult manœuvres, these generous Christians have enumerated the motives of their sacrifices; they declare themselves to have offered them sometimes for the expiation of a crime, [14] a misfortune, or an accident of which they have been the involuntary cause; sometimes to confirm their renunciation of ill-acquired wealth, of unjust pretentions, or of inveterate enmities; sometimes to thank God for a signal grace, for a danger turned aside, for a happy return from pilgrimage or crusade, or to draw down His protection at the moment of entering the lists; [15] sometimes, and especially to sanctify their wealth

[12] "Peccatorum meorum memor, ut Deus fieri dignetur immemor." — *Gallia Christiana*, t. ii. p. 1094. Charter of January 1081.

[13] We shall see in the course of our narrative a thousand proofs of this assertion. I quote in the mean time some few borrowed in part from the excellent researches of HURTER on this same subject, in his *Histoire d'Innocent III.*, t. iii. p. 430 of the German edition.

[14] "Peccatorum nostrorum vulneribus cujusdam medicammis cauteriam adhibere piam statuimus." — Donation of Leopold of Austria, ap. *Mon. Boic.*, iv. 314.

[15] "Milon Balbe, of Til-Chatel, chevalier in 1060, *monomachia certaturus pugna*, recommends himself to the prayers of the monks of Bèze, and gives them his manor near the church of Lux." — DUMAY, *Appendice* of COURTEPÉE, iv. 695.

and their increase to the best advantage, by making it profitable to the poor and to travellers.[16] They desired thus to consecrate before the Lord, perhaps, their resignation under an incurable malady [17] — perhaps the foreseen extinction of an ancient and illustrious race [18] — perhaps the desire of repose after a disturbed life — admiration of a picturesque or solitary site — the choice of a family sepulchre [19] — above all, the memory of a long line of ancestors, of a wife faithfully cherished, [20] of a child prematurely taken away, or even of a faithful servant or follower. [21] Sometimes, also, they designed that offering for the salvation of one loved unlawfully and beyond measure, but whom the Church had not forbidden them to cherish beyond the tomb. It was thus that Philip Augustus endowed a convent of a hundred and twenty nuns near the tomb of Agnes de Meranie.

Thus, from every page of these annals of feudal generosity, rises some monument of the mysteries of divine mercy, of human grief, and Christian virtue; and we perceive, besides, how the motives of donation became unceasingly motives of conversion, and how often a man who had commenced by giving to God his lands and possessions, finished by the offering of himself.

The munificence of kings assured the existence of these grand and royal abbeys, such as St. Germain-des-Prés, St. Denys, the Mont-Cassin, Cluny, Canterbury, Westminster, Hautecombe, which served at once for archives, for sanctuary, and for the sepulture of dynasties. Others were regarded as the special patrimony of certain noble races, which, from father to son, they believed themselves obliged to maintain and enrich, and in which each exploit, each alliance,

[16] "In usum pauperum et peregrinorum." — Ap. Digby, x. 636. "Centuplam mercedem a Deo expectantes." — Vogt. *Indec Monum. Verdens.*, ii. 248.

[17] "Cum ex iniquitate mea devenerim ad morbum incurabilem gratias ago Deo meo." — *Gall. Christ.* Inst. Eccl. Senecens., n. vii., ap. Hurt., iii. 456.

[18] "Cum Deus omnipotens fructu ventris nescio quo suo occulto judicio me privasset, mei patrimonii hæredem constituens Crucifixum." — *Chron. Zweltens.*, i. 245.

[19] "Quomodo multi principum et nobilium tubam extremam hic pausando præclegerunt expectari." — A Weingarten: see Hess. *Monum Guelf.*, p. 197.

[20] "Pro salute Mathildæ, sponsæ meæ." — *Monast. Anglic.*, p. 1034. "In refrigerium animæ suæ et suorum." — Langebeck, SS. iv. 355. "Dederunt pro anima matris suæ bona memoriæ." — A Gottesgnade ap. Leukfeld.

[21] In 1278, thirty livres were bequeathed to the Abbot of Settim and his Cistercian monks, near Florence, by the Countess Beatrice, daughter of Count Rodolf of Capraja, and widow of Count Marcovaldo, "*per l'anima di donna Giuliana, la quale fu mia cameriera.*" — Lami. *Monum. della Chiese Fiorentina*, i. 75, ap. Cantu, *Storia degl' Italiani.*

each degree of their genealogy, each death, was commemorated by new gifts. A similar conviction discloses itself, and beams like a luminous torch across all that ocean of munificence which inundated the monastic institutions during the Catholic ages. "Give me," said St. Eloy to his master, "this site, that I may construct there a ladder by which you and I shall mount to the celestial kingdom."[22] Six centuries later, upon the shores of the Baltic, the same thought is reproduced in the same terms — a Count d'Orlamunde, in endowing a monastery in Hamburg, inscribed this axiom upon its charter of foundation: "He who erects or repairs a monastery builds himself a stair to ascend to heaven."[23] And at the same period, one of the chiefs of the Norman nobility, then masters of England, the Count of Chester, saw in a dream his ancestor, who pointed out to him one of his domains, saying: "Here must be erected a ladder by which the angels shall ascend every day to carry men's prayers to God, and descend with His blessings."[24] Enlightened by the infallible light of the Gospel, they perceived that their inheritance, of which they thus despoiled themselves for God, was that which did them most honor and endured the best. They believed as the Emperor Frederick II. believed, when he wrote at the head of one of his charters this noble thought: "In the midst of the universal decay of human things, man can always snatch from time something that is stable and perpetual — namely, that which he gives to God: he thus links his terrestrial patrimony to the patrimony of God."[25]

But kings and nobles had no monopoly of this inexhaustible liberality. The Christian people, *sancta plebs Dei*, claimed and exercised in their turn the right of giving to God and to the saints, and of mingling their offerings with those of their superiors. The most insignificant gift, coming from the humblest hand, to immortalize the benefit and the benefactor —

[22] "Hanc mihi, domine mi rex, serenitas tua concedat, quo possim ibi, et tibi et mihi scalam construere, per quam mereamur ad cœlestia regna uterque conscendere." — St. Audoeni, *Vit. S. Eligii*, i. 15.

[23] "Qui claustra construit vel delapsa reparat cœlum ascensurus scalam sibi facit." — Ap. Hurter, t. iv. p. 450.

[24] "Erigenda est scala per quam descendunt et ascendunt angelorum preces, et vota hominum Deo offerentur et referant gratiam." — *Monast. Anglican.*, t. i. p. 890.

[25] "Etsi omnia caduca sunt hominum et temporum diuturnitate labuntur, sunt tamen ex hominibus aliqua perpetua stabilitate connexa, illa videlicet, quæ divinis addita cultibus, hæreditatis Dei funiculum inter homines amplectuntur." — Pirro, *Sicilia Sacra*. Priorat. Messan., p. 1096. Ap. Hurter, iii. 455.

the offering of the poor, of the serf, of the widow, and of the beggar — was registered in the daily prayer of the monks, and immortalized in their annals, side by side with the magnificent foundations of princes and lords. "Mathilde has given us a vineyard; Barbe, a lay woman, has given a table-cloth; Alaïde has given a calf"[26] — thus we read in the *Necrology of Lorsch*, amidst the evidences of the generosity and grandeur of the Carlovingians. And when Croyland, the principal monastery in England, had been burned down in 1091, and rebuilt, thanks to the gifts of the Norman nobility, the Abbott Ingulph was careful to enter in his *Chronicle*, which is one of the most important historical monuments of the time: "Among so many benefactors, let us not forget the holy memory of Juliana, the beggar of Weston, who, in her misery, gave us all that she could, and all that she had — namely, twisted thread to sew the vestments of our monks."[27]

Great and small thus confirm the truth of the definition which a Council has given of the possessions of the Church, and more especially of monastic possessions: "They are the offering of the faithful, the patrimony of the poor, and the ransom of souls."

It is thus, then, that the treasure of the monks has been formed — these are their titles of possession. No family, no state, no individual has ever possessed titles more glorious or more legitimate.

Such is, however, the wickedness and blind perversity of man, unfaithful to the law of salvation, that of all human property, the only one which has been everywhere attacked, everywhere calumniated, and, in our own days, everywhere suppressed, is monastic property! Kingdoms and republics, autocrats and demagogues, you have preserved and consecrated the spoliations of force, the triumphs of speculation; and you have confiscated the fruits of sacrifice, the gifts of repentance, the legacy of grief; you have annihilated the works created by two things which, when they are pure, are the loveliest in the world — freedom and love!

[26] "Mathildis dedit nobis vineam; Barba laica dedit nobis mappam; Alheidis dedit vitulum." — *Necrol. Lauresh.* in SCHANNAT. *Vindict.*, tit. vii. n. l, ap. HURTER, iii. 477.

[27] "Nec oblivionem patiatur, inter tot benefactores pauperculæ Julianæ de Westona sancta memoria, quæ dedit nobis de sua inopia totum victum suum, scilicet, filum retortum in summa magna ad consuendum ratrum nostri monasterii vestimenta." — INGULPH. CROYL. Ap. GALE, *Script. Rer. Anglic.*, t. i. p. 99.

Heaven grant that this crime may not be cruelly punished! Heaven grant that the logic of spoliation may not be carried to its utmost conclusions, and that implacable avengers, improving upon your example, may not appear to envelope innocent and guilty in one common proscription, in the name of those principles which had their first victory in the spoliation of the monastic orders! The sons of those who destroyed the monasteries everywhere, have already learned, to their cost, that of all the arguments which have overthrown monastic property, there is not one which might not batter a breach in general property. This cannot be sufficiently kept in mind; they too, desperate and trembling, have seen men rise before them to demand their goods, throwing at their head that same name of *idlers* with which they had despoiled the monks. Are they at the end of their experiences and chastisements? Does not the storm approach hour by hour, and may we not hear yet once more, surging up to the gates of modern palaces, the tide of that multitude which confounds all property, ancient and modern, in a common reprobation, and whose apostles have declared that leisure was a crime against society, and property a theft?

CHAPTER VII.

DECLINE.

Le mura, che soleano esser badia,
Fatte sono spelonche, e le cocolle
Sacca son piene di farina ria.
Paradiso, c. xxii.

But there is a last and more serious complaint which must be traced without evasion — the corruption of the religious orders. Great disorders and abuses, we are told, reigned among the monks, especially in their last times. So they did. Yes, we confess it. They were given up to laxness and enervation. Again we say, yes. They no longer observed those laws of fervor, of austerity, and of discipline, which were the implicit condition of the liberal gifts with which they had been overwhelmed. In one word, they were in full decline. Yes, it is but too true; save some glorious

exceptions — such as the Chartreux, the Trappists, and the Jesuits — the Religious were in decadence at the moment when they were reached by the devastating scythe of the past century and of our own time.

I do not evade this charge. I admit and confirm it. I even dare to believe that there is none among the enemies of the monks who has studied more attentively than myself these disorders and abuses, no one who has dwelt longer upon the dark side of an admirable history. I know these abuses, I confess them; and what is more, I shall narrate them. Yes, if God permits me to continue my work, I shall relate them with unmitigated sincerity, and henceforward in the pages which you are about to read, wherever occasion presents, I shall show the evil beside the good, the shadow beside the light; I shall say what were the errors, and sometimes the crimes, of the monks, at the risk of surprising and even wounding affections which I respect, and a modesty which is dear to me, because it is necessary to truth, and because I would not have any one suspect of blindness, partiality, or ignorance, my very insufficient apology for these illustrious victims.

I shall relate these abuses. But on whose authority? On that of the monks themselves; for it is most frequently to them alone that we owe the knowledge of these abuses; to their confessions, to their lamentations, to their narratives, to the chronicles of their houses written by themselves with a frankness and simplicity still more admirable than their laborious patience. They were not acquainted with the rule dictated by the prophet of their persecutors: "Lie boldly, lie always." They spoke the entire truth, and to their own cost; they spoke it with sadness, blushing when that was inevitable, but with a legitimate certainty that the evil which they denounced to posterity, very far from being the natural result of their institution, was its direct contradiction, and that to vanquish and dethrone it nothing more was necessary than a return, always possible, to its primitive rule. And I also would, like them, speak the truth, and the entire truth, not only concerning the monks, but even of the Church and her ministers, whensoever it is needful. I shall conceal neither the prevarications nor the weaknesses of those who have failed, that I may feel myself empowered to render a free and pure testimony to those who have fought well, and that I may have the right of stigmatizing among the enemies of truth the evil which I shall not spare in her own children

and ministers. For by what right could I be severe towards the wicked, if I had not begun by being severe towards those who, charged by God himself to combat vice, have become its instruments and accomplices?

If I threw a lying veil over the corruption of the religious orders during the last period of their existence, how could I explain to the eyes of Christians, or even of unbelievers, the terrible decree of the Almighty, who has permitted that this long-enduring grandeur should be swept away in a single day, and that the heirs of so many saints and heroes, delivered bound hand and foot to the mortal stroke, should almost everywhere succumb without resistance and without glory?

And again, I do not write a panegyric but a history: I despise these pitiful mutilations of history, dictated by a false and feeble prudence, which have perhaps done as much injury to the good cause as the shameful falsifications of our adversaries. When I meet with such in the books of certain apologists, I seem to hear the remarkable interrogation of the patriarch — "Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for Him?"[1]

Some timid minds will blame me, I know; but I prefer the authority of St. Gregory the Great, who was not less great as a monk than as a pope, and who has written — "It is better to have scandal than a lie."[2] I declare myself of the opinion of the two most illustrious and most zealous champions for the rights of the Church with whom I am acquainted. I say with Cardinal Baronius: "God preserve me from betraying the truth rather than betray the feebleness of some guilty minister of the Roman Church;"[3] and I add with the Count de Maistre, "We owe to the popes only truth, and they have no need of anything else."[4]

But, above all, I shall speak that holy and necessary truth when it concerns the monks and their faults, because, as St. Bernard, that great denunciator of the disorders of religious

[1] Job xiii. 7.

[2] "Melius est ut scandalum oriatur, quam ut veritas relinquatur." — S. Gregor., *Homil.* 7, *in Ezechiel*, quoted by S. Bernard.

[3] The passage is too fine not to be given entire: "Nos vero nec ejusmodi sumus ut proditione veritatis delinquentem quemlibet Ecclesiæ Romanæ ministrum prodere nolimus, cum nec ipsa sibi hoc vindicat Romana Ecclesia, ut membra sua et latere suo Legatos missos omni carere turpitudine asserat. Non enim Deum æmulatur ut fortior illo sit. Si enim ipse Deus, qui facit Angelos suos spiritus, et ministros suos ignem urentem, tamen in Angelis suis reperit pravitatem, quid præsumet ipsa, . . . cum sciat ipsa non supernos Angelos mittere, sed homines." — *Annales*, ad. ann. 1125, c. 12.

[4] *Du Pape*, lib. ii. c. 13.

life has so well said, "It is not against the Monastic Order, but for it, that I contend, when I reprehend the vices of men who make part of it; and I do not fear thus to displease those who love the order — far otherwise, I am sure of pleasing them by pursuing that which they hate." [5]

But let us add also, with a great monk of our own day, "Abuses prove nothing against any institution; and if it is necessary to destroy everything that has been subject to abuse — that is to say, of things which are good in themselves, but corrupted by the liberty of man — God himself ought to be seized upon His inaccessible throne, where too often we have seated our own passions and errors by His side." [6]

And who shall dare to assert, besides, that these abuses were a natural or necessary consequence of the monastic institution? Good sense and history prove to the contrary; but it is only too well known how little human weakness is compatible with sustained perfection. No human institution has been able to produce results always excellent; but the most numerous and purest of such have been produced by the monastic orders. So much for the institution, and all that naturally proceeds from it. Abuses and disorders proceed only from that natural depravity of man which follows and finds him out everywhere. There is not a single accusation made against the religious orders, which may not be imputed with as much or more reason to all human institutions, even the most august. What do I say? there is not one which may not penetrate direct to the Church herself and entire Christianity. Yes, the Church, although of divine institution, has too often seen her purity tarnished among her children as among her pontiffs by crying abuses and monstrous disorders. Jesus Christ has promised to the Church that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her; but not that He should exempt her ministers from human weakness. God delivers no man from the responsibility of free-will; he has left a power of choice, between good and evil, even to the angels, in order to insure the glorious liberty of well-doing, and to endow His creatures with the right of meriting the happiness He offers them. And when we reproach the monks with having degenerated from their

[5] "Non adversus ordinem, sed pro ordine disputandus ero. Quin imo gratum procul dubio accepturi sunt, si persequimur quod et ipsi oderunt." — *Apologia ad Guillelm.*, c. 7.

[6] Lacordaire, *Discours sur les Etudes Philosophiques*, August 10, 1839.

primitive fervor, and no longer resembling their founders, we forget that most modern Christians have still less resemblance to the Christians of the primitive Church. This remark was made by Erasmus three centuries since,[7] and has lost none of its truth. This is certain, that at all ages, even those which have most detracted from the renown and dignity of the Church and monastic orders, the primitive honor of those great institutions remained intact, since all the scandals with which they were reproached proceeded exclusively from the violation of their own rules and the decline of their original spirit. It is not less incontestable that till their last days they continued to produce a certain number of holy souls and great minds, worthy of the everlasting admiration and gratitude of Christians.

Voltaire himself made the same admission,[8] in speaking of the eighteenth century. He knew it well; and when he was compelled to do justice to religion, we may well believe him.

Having said this, and very far from wishing to justify, or even to excuse, the degenerate monks who were contemporaries of Erasmus and Voltaire, we approach at once to the dark side of our subject, which, besides, we shall encounter more or less during the whole course of our researches.

Pointed out and stigmatized from the origin of the monastic institution by those saints and doctors who were its most ardent apologists, by Chrysostom as by Augustin — combated, pursued, and repressed by the authors of all the rules and of all the reforms, from St. Benedict to St. Bernard — these abuses and scandals periodically renewed themselves, like the heads of the hydra, sometimes under new appearances, but always grafted upon the old stock of perversity and corruption which is found in all consciences, and in every

[7] "Quænam igitur est animi perversitas odisse monachum ob hoc ipsum quod monachus est? Profiteris te Christianum et adversaris eis qui Christo simillimi sunt? Hic protinus occinent, scio plerosque plurimum abesse ab hac imagine priscorum monachorum. At quotiesquisque est Christianorum, qui primitivæ Ecclesiæ sanctimoniam hactenus retinuerit? Nullum igitur vitæ genus probabimus, si propter malos oderimus et bonos." — Erasmi, *Epist. ad Johan. Einstad. Carthusian.*

[8] "There is still scarcely a monastery which does not contain admirable souls who do honor to human nature. Too many writers take pleasure in searching out the disorders and vices by which those sanctuaries of piety were sometimes profaned. *It is certain that secular life has always been more vicious*, and that great crimes have not been committed in monasteries; but they have been more remarked by their contrast to the rule; no state has always been pure." — *Essai sur les Mœurs*, c. 139. See also the remarkable confession of the Anglican Maitland, *The Dark Ages*, Preface, p. 11.

human society. Ten centuries passed without wearing out the perseverance, the courage, the austere and fertile genius of the reformers, whose labors we shall relate. The modest and silent virtue of the great majority of monks counterbalanced the exceptional abuses, and continued to merit the admiration of men and the clemency of God. But there came a time when the abuses overpowered the law, when the exceptions eclipsed the rule, and when the triumph of evil seemed irreparable. At the end of the fourteenth century, the flame which St. Bernard had rekindled everywhere in aid of the Cistercian institution having languished, the breath from on high, the true inspiration of the monk, seemed to abandon the old orders, that it might give life to the mendicant orders, and, after these had perished, to the great congregations, which, up to our own times, have been the honor and consolation of the Church.

The great Benedictine order, with its immense property, its vast patronage, its magnificent monuments, and the position which it had acquired amidst all the movements and interests of the social and political world, remained notwithstanding one of the greatest institutions of Christendom. Many partial, local, even national reforms,[9] which arrested the course of evil, and retarded its decline, rose from time to time in its own bosom. But no universal, general, sustained, and sovereign effort was attempted. Some branches alone blossomed for a time, and seemed to promise an abundant and immortal growth: however, the old trunk continued tainted at heart, and wasted by an internal decay, which became rapidly more and more apparent, and was a permanent subject of scandal and reproach among good men as well as among the wicked.

Whilst the pure and generous indignation of Dante breathed forth in those memorable lines which he places in the mouth of St. Benedict himself,[10] invectives more frivolous, founded upon accusations more precise and dangerous, came to light in the novels of Boccaccio, and of all those imitators who, after him, infected Italian literature with their weak libertinage. We find such in all the songs of the feudal or popular poets of the Western kingdoms.[11] Monas-

[9] "For example, those of Bursfield, in Westphalia; St. Justina, at Padua; St. Maur, St. Hidulphe, and St. Vanne, in France; La Trappe, &c.

[10] *Paradiso*, c. xxii. See the motto of this chapter.

[11] Among a thousand examples which might be quoted, I have chosen the portrait of the prior who went on a pilgrimage to St. Thomas of Canterbury,

tic corruption became the commonplace of satire, whilst at the same time it was the constant subject of too just lamentation to all pious souls, as well as to all the high authorities of the Church.

"For many ages," says Bossuet, in the first page of the best book which has ever been written against Protestantism — "for many ages the reformation of ecclesiastical discipline has been desirable."[12] By confession of all, that reformation, "desired by the people, the doctors, the Catholic prelates, and unhappily evaded,"[13] should have first been brought to bear upon the religious orders.

as painted by Chaucer, the father of English poetry, in the fourteenth century (*Prologue* of the *Canterbury Tales*, 173-207): —

"The reule of seint Maure and of seint Beneit,
Because that it was olde and somdele streit,
This ilke monk lette olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the trace.
He yave not of the text a pulled hen,
That saith, that hunters ben not holy men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is rekkeles,
Is like to a fish that is waterles;
This is to say, a monk out of his cloistre.
This ilke text held he not worth an oistre.
And I say his opinion was good.
What shulde he studie, and make himselven wood,
Upon a book in cloistre alway to pore,
Or swinken with his hondes, and laboure,
As Austin bit? how shal the world be served?
Let Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therfore he was a prickasoure a right:
Greihoundes he hadde as swift as foul of flight:
Of pricking and of hunting for the hare
Was all his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I saw his sleves purfiled at the hond
With gris, and that the finest of the lond.
And for to fasten his hood under his chinne,
He hadde of gold ywrought a curious pinne:
A love-knotte in the greter end ther was.
His hed was balled, and shone as any glas,
And eke his face, as it hadde been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point.
His eyen stepe, and rolling in his hed,
That stemed as a forneis of a led.
His botes souple, his hors in gret estat,
Now certainly he was a fayre prelat.
He was not pale as a forpined gost.
A fat swan loved he best of any rost.
His palfrey was as broune as is a bery."

[12] *Histoire des Variations*, liv. i. c. 1.

[13] *Ibid.* — He says elsewhere, with the noble candor which adds so great a charm and authority to his genius, "The prodigious revolt of Lutheranism has been a visible punishment of the enervation of the clergy. . . . God has visited upon our fathers, as He continues to visit upon us, all the laxness of

Many of the monasteries excited envy and scandal by their excessive opulence. This opulence, produced by the generous efforts and painful labors of their first inhabitants, was no longer justified by the sight of the personal toil of the monks in the cultivation of their domains, a work which was now left to the peasants. Without depriving its legitimate possessors of this wealth, it might easily have been turned into other channels not less profitable to the Church and to the poor, instead of allowing it to engender that idleness, and those other irregularities still more shameful, which were its inevitable consequence.

Whilst the fundamental laws of the institution, in the midst of this moral ruin and material prosperity, suffered the gravest alterations, the bishops were grieved to see the ties of ecclesiastical discipline and authority put to scorn by the abuse of exemptions. These privileges, specially legitimate and necessary at the origin of the great monastic foundations, had become, by the progress of time and the blind indulgence with which they were lavished, a useless, dangerous, and sometimes even ridiculous anomaly. St. Bernard had already employed some of the boldest accents of his impetuous eloquence [14] to mark out this abuse, which diminished without disappearing under the blow of the solemn condemnation of the Council of Trent.[15]

Unhappily that great and holy assembly, ill seconded, and struck with impotence besides by the ill-will of princes, could not bring an efficacious or durable remedy to the abuses, truly fatal and revolting, of the *commende*. The Fathers of the Council poured forth on this subject prayers which were not granted, and decreed prohibitions none of which were carried out.[16]

past centuries, beginning with the earliest times, in which evil customs, contrary to the rule, began to prevail. . . . Let us take heed, all of us who are superiors. . . . We must bear the penalty for all the scorned canons, all the abuses authorized by our example." — *Meditations sur l'Evangile*, 64th day.

[14] "Non est bona arbor faciens fructus tales, insolentias, dissolutiones, dilapidationes, simultates, scandala, odia." — *De Consider.*, lib. iii. c. 4. — Cf. *Tract. de Morib. et Officio Episc.*, c. 9.

[15] "Quoniam privilegia et exemptiones, quæ variis titulis plerisque conceduntur, hodie perturbationem in episcoporum jurisdictione excitare, et exemptis occasionem laxioris vitæ præbere dignoscuntur." — *Sess.* xxiv., *De Reformat.*, c. 11. — Cf. *Sess.* vi. c. 3.

[16] *Sessio* xxi., *De Reformat.*, c. 8. — *Sessio* xxv., *De Regul. et Monial.*, c. 20 and 21. — We quote only this last text: "Sancta Synodus . . . confidit SS. Romanum pontificem pro sua pietate et prudentia curaturum, quantum hæc tempora ferre posse viderit, ut iis (monasteriis) quæ nunc

We shall see hereafter the origin and special nature of this scourge, which was contemporary with the earliest times of the institution, but which, more or less restrained[17] during the middle ages, only attained in the sixteenth century to those shameful and formidable proportions which have made it the leprosy of the Monastic Order. Let us only say here that the result of this *commende* was to bestow the title of abbot, with the greater part of the revenues of a monastery, upon ecclesiastics who were strangers to monastic life, and too often even upon simple laymen, provided they were not married. It inflicted thus a deep and radical taint to these institutions, and wherever Protestantism had not succeeded in battering them down violently, it inoculated them with a disgraceful and deadly poison.

Subsequent to the Reformation, Catholic Germany was happy enough to get rid of this incubus. Belgium, thanks to her ancient political freedom, could impose even upon her most powerful sovereigns, such as Charles V. and Philip II., the obligation of preserving her from that ignominy.[18] Italy was less happy: Mont-Cassin, the cradle and home of the Benedictine order, suffered the disgrace of being included amongst the *sixteen* abbeys, with which the son of the Medicis, afterwards Leo X., was provided from his cradle as with so many bawbles. There too the ancient and illustrious Abbey of Farfa was bestowed about 1530 upon one Napoleon Orsini, who made it the headquarters of a band of brigands, and who, at their head, ravaged all Central Italy, up to the time when he was killed in the attempt to carry off his own sister from her bridegroom.[19] I grieve to say that similar incidents appear in too many pages of the history of those tempestuous times.

But it was specially in France, after the concordat of Leo

commendata reperiuntur, et quæ suos conventus habent, regulares personæ, ejusdem ordinis expresse professæ, et quæ gregi præire et præesse possunt, præficiantur. Quæ vero in posterum vacabunt, non nisi regularibus spectatæ virtutis et sanctitatis conferantur."

[17] Clement V. and Innocent VI. distinguished themselves among all the popes by the revocation of all *commendes* anterior to their pontificates. But the evil revived incessantly. Neither the Council of Basle nor the Pragmatic Sanction discussed it. — Thomassin, *Vetus et Nova Disciplina de Beneficiis*, part ii. lib. iii. c. 19 and 20.

[18] The article 57 of the *Joyeuse Entrée* of Brabant, to which Charles V. and Philip II. were obliged to swear, as the Dukes of Burgundy had sworn, and which was only abolished by Joseph II., declares: "The sovereign shall not give in any manner, nor allow to be given, in *commende*, any abbey, prelacy, or dignity of Brabant."

[19] Cantu, *Storia degli Italiani*, t. v.

X. with Francis I., that this evil attained its utmost limits. This concordat gave to the king the right of nominating to all the abbeys and conventual priories of the kingdom. It certainly warned him to confer these benefices only on the Religious, but that condition was invariably eluded or violated. The individuals invested by the king with these benefices, without any intervention of the community whose revenues they were about to devour, had only to make interest with the Pope, who despatched to them the bulls of their new dignity, surrogating them to the rights of the elective and regular abbots of former times, and reserving to a cloistral prior the spiritual administration of the monastery thus despoiled of its most precious rights. This frightful state of things lasted till the Revolution. For the partial irregularities which, especially in houses not directly subject to the influence of the great feudal families, had followed elections, the direct nomination of the kings, established by the concordat of 1516, substituted a criminal, radical, and incurable disorder. The title of abbot, borne and distinguished by so many saints, so many doctors, so many illustrious pontiffs, fell into the mire. Neither residence nor any of the duties of the religious life were any longer compulsory. It was nothing more than a lucrative sinecure, which the Crown disposed of at its pleasure, or at the pleasure of its ministers, and too often to the profit of the most unworthy passions or interests. In vain did the permanent scandal of these monasteries deprived of their natural heads, and farmed by strangers who only appeared among them to grind down the inhabitants, call forth their unanimous and frequent complaints; in vain did the estates of Blois and Paris, like most of the political and religious assemblies of the sixteenth century, petition for the restoration of ancient discipline: all was useless. The evil grew more and more aggravated. The very idea of the pious and charitable destination of these glorious creations of the faith of our fathers, was soon obliterated from the minds of those who thus disposed of the treasures of the past, as well as of those who were nourished by them. This magnificent patrimony of faith and charity, created and augmented by the ages, and consecrated by its originators expressly to the maintenance of a life regular and in common, and to the help of the poor, was thus transformed into a fiscal reserve attached to the royal treasury, which the hand of the sovereigns exhausted at will in the endeavor to satisfy the rapacity

of their courtiers, or, as has been said, to *gorge* and to *enslave* their nobility.

My readers, I venture to say, cannot be more sad and distressed than I am, to see myself condemned to relate how abbeys, the most ancient and illustrious in the annals of the country and the Church, have served as appanages to the bastards of kings or to their most unworthy favorites,[20] — and even sometimes as the price of the disgraceful favors of a royal mistress.[21] Later, and during the course of our civil discords after the League and the Fronde, they were the object of an avowed and revolting traffic, and formed the common money of all markets in the negotiations of the times.[22] And at length, when absolute monarchy had triumphed over all resistance, these great and celebrated houses fell most frequently a prey to ministers who had nothing of the ecclesiastic but his robe; after having gratified the ambition of Richelieu[23] and the cupidity of Mazarin, they went to swell the cynical opulence of the Abbé Dubois[24] and of the Abbé Terray.[25]

It was perhaps for lesser treasons that the angel of the

[20] Charles of Valois, Duke of Angoulême, bastard of Charles IX. and Marie Touchet, was commendatory abbot of the Chaise-Dieu at the age of thirteen, and still drew the revenues of it in 1599, although long married. The Abbey of Bourgueil, in the diocese of Angers, had been given to Bussy d'Amboise, the favorite of the brother of Henry III., the worst subject of his time, who was assassinated by the Count de Montsoreau, 19th August, 1579. In the Journal of P. de l'Estoile, he is always styled Abbot of Bourgueil.

[21] Henry IV. assigned in 1601 to Corisande d'Andouin, Countess of Guiche, the revenues of the Abbey of Châtillon, where St. Bernard was educated (Courtepée, *Descript. Hist. de la Bourgogne*, t. vi. p. 375). We have a letter from him in three lines, where he gives an abbey to Rosny — the Protestant Rosny — and asks of him at the same time 50,000 crowns for his mistress, Mlle. d'Entraigues, "portion du prix de sa prétendue virginité," says M. Berger de Xivrey. — *Recueil des Lettres Missives de Henri IV.*, t. v. p. 179.

[22] There was sold in 1858 at Paris an autograph letter of the Duchess of Montbazon, who wrote to Mazarin to stipulate that her daughter should have an abbey at the time of the approaching peace. "*Sy celle de Caen venoit à vaquer ou tout octre* (sic) *bonne, je vous la demande.*"

[23] He endowed himself with the *commende* of Citeaux, of Cluny, and almost all the great abbeys of France, and this in spite of the express prohibition of the Council of Trent, which had interdicted abbeys, heads of orders, from being put in *commende* (*Sess.* xxiv. c. 21). He only followed in this the example of the famous Cardinal of Lorraine in the preceding century, and of the Cardinal of Châtillon, brother of Coligny, who had thirteen abbeys in *commende* up to the time when he married, declaring himself a Protestant.

[24] Dubois was titular of the seven Abbeys of Nogent, St. Just, Airvaulx, Bourgueil, Bergues-St.-Vinox, St. Bertin, and Cercamp, the united incomes of which amounted to 204,000 livres. — St. Simon, *Mémoires*, ch. 608, ed. Delloye.

[25] This controller-general enjoyed the Abbeys of Molesmes and Troarn; the former had been the cradle of the order of Citeaux, and the latter was

justice of the Lord pronounced against one of the communities of the primitive Church the formidable sentence — "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead!"[26]

Let us imagine to ourselves what could become, in most of these monasteries, despoiled of their most essential prerogatives, of the true motives of their existence, and metamorphosed into farms belonging to strangers, of some five or six unhappy monks, abandoned to themselves and overwhelmed under the weight of their past glory and their present debasement! Can we wonder at the progress of corruption, of spiritual and intellectual decline? What were they else but so many isolated detachments of soldiers, forgotten by their army, without leader and without discipline, who found themselves thus naturally exposed and almost condemned to all the temptations of idleness?[27]

Life ebbed away from them, little by little — not only religious life, but life of every kind. In spite of the attractions which an existence easy and rich, almost without care and mortifications, offered to vulgar souls, a sufficient number of monks could not be found to people these dishonored sanctuaries. Let us well observe, to the honor, of human nature as of Christianity and religious life, that the corrupt orders were always barren. The world would have none of them, as God would not. Like God, the world addressed them in these words: "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

It was in vain that, to fill up these vacancies, they had recourse to another abuse, to which the Church has too often closed her eyes. Forced vocations, that too legitimate cause of ruin and unpopularity to the religious orders, dates back, like the *commende*, to a far-distant age. They were made subservient to political purposes under the Merovingians and Carlovingians, as the well-known fate of Clodoald and Tassilon testifies. But in the middle ages, during the highest period of monastic fervor, we can scarcely find any trace of them.

founded by the Norman dukes of the eleventh century. The one was valued at 31,000 livres of income, and the other at 80,000. The journal of the advocate Barbier, v. ii., discloses the scandalous use which was made of the revenues of the glorious Abbey of St. Germain-des-Prés by its last commendatory abbot, the Count of Clermont, a prince of the blood, otherwise brilliant and intrepid in war, as became a Bourbon.

[26] Rev. iii. l.

[27] Of the many thousand monasteries founded in France during thirteen centuries, there remained, in 1789, only one hundred and twenty which were *en regle;* that is to say, who retained the right to elect their abbot and dispose of their incomes.

They reappear at these epochs of decadence and corruption, in which the self-love and cupidity of families too often found in the ecclesiastical superiors accomplices all the more docile, as they were themselves strangers to the true conditions of cloistral life. That modern tyranny which has produced the revolutionary spirit, and which proscribes the vow, was then preceded and represented by a tyranny which, with an equal disdain for the liberty and dignity of the human soul, imposed that vow. "Consent," said one of our old and illustrious jurisconsults, "is the seal, the source, and the soul of the vow. Wretched hyprocrisy," says again the eloquent Antoine Le Maistre, "which you shield under the shadow of a profession so holy in itself, and so sweet to those on whom God has bestowed the choice, spirit, and love of it, but which reprobates the inhuman hardships suffered by poor children to whom no such impulse has been given, who have been forced to enter there by the violence of their parents, who are bound to it by chains of fear and terror, and who are retained there by the same force, by the same terror, which prisons and tortures would hold over them." [28]

This criminal abuse was incessantly counterbalanced by a multitude of freely-conceived vocations, nobly persevered in, and accomplished, despite the resistance of their families, by scions of the highest aristocracy. Bossuet, in his sermons for the profession of Mademoiselle de Bouillon and other daughters of great houses, has cast his eagle glance upon these astonishing contradictions. "What has not covetousness spoiled?" he says elsewhere: "it has vitiated even paternal love. Parents throw their children into the cloister without vocation, and prevent their entering when they have one." [29]

Of these two evils, the last is still often seen among ourselves. The first had gradually diminished before the great catastrophe which destroyed, at once, all the abuses and all the rights of cloistral life. It yielded to the irresistible empire of manners and public opinion. If moral constraint was still sometimes employed in Italy and elsewhere to introduce daughters of the nobility and middle classes [30] into chapter-

[28] See the fine pleading of Antoine Le Maistre, quoted by Oscar de Vallée, *Judiciary Eloquence in the Seventeenth Century*, 1856, pp. 105 and 116.

[29] *Pensées Chrétiennes et Morales*, No. 42. — It is well known that in his time the word *religion* meant a religious order, and that they still call becoming a *religieux*, *entrer en religion*.

[30] Thence this proverb, so universally quoted in Italy in the eighteenth century, and with too much justice: "*La badie sono la preda degl' uomini e la tomba della donne.*"

houses and female convents, we can affirm that in the French monasteries, in the last period of their existence, there was scarcely to be found a single individual who had not entered by her own choice. The startling contradiction which the declarations of Diderot, La Harpe, and many others, upon *cloistered victims*, received in 1791, proved this abundantly. In a single day all the cloisters were destroyed and the monastic vow declared null. How many monks, how many nuns, married? Certainly not one in a thousand. Most part of the women, in particular, voluntarily re-entered the cloister as soon as they had the power.

Instead of obliging any man to become a monk, or using restraint to keep him so, there seems to have been a greater inclination to make the abandonment and transformation of that state more practicable. Individual requests for permission to leave the cloister and live in complete independence, such as that which several Benedictines of St. Maur addressed in 1770 to the Parliament of Paris, were repulsed. But when entire communities demanded to be secularized, their prayer was granted: three of the most ancient abbeys of the diocese of Lyons solicited and obtained that melancholy favor, in the second half of the eighteenth century.[31]

Under the influence of all these united causes, the monastic institution hastened more and more to complete decay. It would be unjust to make this condemnation too general, and above all to forget the generous attempts which, from time to time, lifted up their protest against the invasion of evil and interrupted its march. Many luminous points shone still in Belgium and in Germany, as well as in Italy, Spain, and France. The reform of the order of Citeaux, undertaken in the sixteenth century by the Abbot of Feuillans,[32] was the worthy prelude of that which, a hundred years later, renewed the marvels of the Thebaid, in immortalizing the name of La Trappe. In the seventeenth century, more than one worthy scion of the Benedictine stem, such as Sfondrate[33] and D'Aguirre,[34] showed themselves worthy emulators of

[31] Those of the Isle Barbe, Ainay, and Savigny. — A. Bernard, *Cartulaire de Savigny*, p. 114.

[32] Jean de la Barrière. — See a striking description of his person and appearance before Henry III., in August, 1583, in the *Registre Journal* of Pierre de l'Estoile.

[33] Grand-nephew of Gregory XIV., Monk and Abbot of St. Gall, before being made Cardinal by Innocent XII.

[34] Born in 1630, died in 1699, General of the Congregation of St. Benedict in Spain, made Cardinal by Innocent XI., after his *Defensio Cathedræ S.*

Bellarmine and Baronius, by their zeal for sacred science and the defence of the liberties of the Church; whilst the immortal pleiad which is grouped in history around Mabillon and Montfaucon, crown the name of St. Maur with a glory which remains unrivalled. Mabillon, above all, the most illustrious of modern monks, merits a place by the side of the greatest and most holy, not only for his colossal erudition and inappreciable labors, but especially for the purity of his life, the nobleness, uprightness, and ardent integrity of his character.

But these glorious individuals, and their partial, local, and temporary reforms, were not sufficient to redeem the increasing miseries and infirmities of the general mass of an institution, which would have required the employment of all the strength and solicitude of the Church to save and regenerate it. In France especially — that is to say, in the country of all Christendom which, whether for good or evil, exerts the strongest influence upon the rest of the world — the great majority of the monasteries escaped every regenerating influence, remained a prey to the *commende*, and sank deeper and deeper into disorder and discredit. It was thus during all the eighteenth century, and towards its end, a learned Benedictine of St. Germain-des-Prés could thus write to one of his brethern of the congregation of St. Vanne: "Of all the monks of your congregation who come here to lodge, I have scarcely seen one who has edified us. You no doubt would say as much of our brethren who go to you."[35]

A sentiment of contempt, exaggerated but universal, had everywhere replaced the profound veneration with which the great monastic orders had so long inspired the Catholic world.[36] However large a part impiety, and the hatred of the wicked for the Christian name, had in this general senti-

Petri against the Declaration of 1682. Bossuet, even in contending against him, calls him *the light of the Church, model of manners, example of piety*. When a cardinal, he kept always near him two or three monks, with whom he followed the practices of monastic life: before dying, he ordered his heart to be borne to Monte Cassino, "quod S. Patris Benedicti ab adolescentiæ vestigiis adhæserat." He composed beforehand his epitaph, thus: —

"Vita Peccator, appellatione Monachus,
S. Benedicti studio Theologus."

[35] Letter of Dom Clement, about 1780, quoted by M. Dantier, *Rapport sur la Correspondance Inédite des Bénédictins*, p. 19.

[36] They had arrived at such a point that one of the most pious, illustrious, and victorious princes of the seventeenth century, Duke Charles V. of Lorraine, competitor of Sobieski, conqueror of Hungary, brother-in-law of the Emperor Leopold I., and ancestor of the present reigning house in Austria, wrote in his *Testament Politique*, intended for the instruction of the princes of the imperial family, these cruel words: "It is not proper to introduce

ment, it is impossible to deny that the religious orders, taken altogether, had undergone the most melancholy change. The tables were turned. From the time of the peace of the Church, and throughout the whole middle ages, the contrast between the two bodies of the clergy, regular and secular, had been startling, and entirely to the advantage of the former. The regular clergy had not only eclipsed, but in some measure swallowed up, the secular clergy. Strictness, fervor, self-devotion, all the priestly virtues, had their home almost exclusively in the cloister. In more recent ages it was precisely the reverse; and when the Revolution came to separate the good wheat from the tares, and to bring out the Gallican Church triumphantly from the most glorious trial to which any Church has ever submitted, the bishops and parish priests almost always showed themselves superior to the monks.

Is it needful to ascertain further the depth of their fall, or to explain the true case of their ruin? When a religious order becomes inferior in virtue or in faith to the remainder of the clergy, it loses the motive of its existence, and signs beforehand its own death-warrant. It is no longer anything, to use the words of Bossuet, but a "spiritual corpse" and its own "living tomb."

Those who may accuse me of an excess of severity, I shall refer to the imposing and incontestable authority of two great lights of the Gallican Church, at a period when monastic corruption was still far from being complete. It is true that their eloquent lamentations were addressed to nuns; but it is unquestionable that abuses and scandals, too frequent in female communities, where still more so in the monasteries of men, of which the *commende* had become the general law, while it was only to be met with in exceptional cases in abbeys of women. Let us listen then to the significant words of Fenelon, preaching, before he was a bishop, the panegyric of St. Bernard before the Bernardine nuns — "Oh reform! reform! which has cost Bernard so many vigils, fasts, tears, sweats, and ardent prayers, can we believe that thou shalt perish? No, no; never let that thought enter my heart. Perish rather the unhappy day

monkhood into councils: they are a kind of men who have never done well to monarchs, and who are destined only to do them harm. . . . . The less there are of priests and monks in a family, the more the idea of religion will be preserved there; peace more assured, and secrets more impenetrable." — *Testament Politique de Charles V.*, quoted by the Count D'Haussonville, *Histoire de la Réunion de la Lorraine*, t. iii. p. 380.

which should like such a fall! What! shall Bernard himself see from the sanctuary where he is crowned, his house ravaged, his work disfigured, and his children a prey to the desires of the age? Rather let my eyes change into fountains of tears: rather let the whole Church wail night and day lest that which was her glory be turned into her shame! . . . Oh daughters of Bernard! let me see your father living in you. He reanimated monastic discipline, which was almost extinguished in his time: will you permit it to perish in yours?"

Similar expressions, not less pointed, are to be found in that famous discourse upon the advantages and duties of the religious life, which is sometimes attributed to Fenelon, and sometimes to Bossuet, and is worthy of either: — "This house is not yours: it is not for you that it was built and founded; it is for the education of young girls. . . . If then it should ever happen (suffer it not, oh God! rather overthrow these walls!) — if it should ever happen that you neglect your essential function; if, forgetting that you are in Jesus Christ, the servants of this youth, you think only of enjoying in peace the consecrated possessions here; if in this humble school of Jesus Christ we find only vain and gorgeous women, forgetful of their birth, and habituated to a disdainful haughtiness which quenches the Spirit of God and effaces the gospel from the depths of the heart, — alas, what a scandal! the pure gold should be changed into lead, the spouse of Jesus Christ, without wrinkles and without blemish, should be blacker than coal, and He should know her no more!"

In the same discourse we find other sad disclosures of the internal condition of the great communities in the seventeenth century. "Poverty is not only unpractised, but unknown. They do not know what it is to be poor, by coarse food, by the necessity of labor, by a simple and narrow lodging, by all the details of life. . . . It is, however, by these means that communities can be liberal, generous, and disinterested. In other days, the hermits of Egypt and the East not only lived by the labor of their hands, but dispensed much alms; ships might be seen on the sea charged with their charities. Now it requires prodigious revenues to support a community. Families accustomed to poverty spare everything — they subsist on little; but the communities are not satisfied with abundance. How many hundreds of families could subsist honestly on a sum which scarcely suffices for the expenditure of one of these communities which pro-

fess to renounce the possessions of the families of the age, in order to embrace poverty! What a satire! what a contrast! If you have business with poor people charged with great families, you often find them upright, moderate, capable of yielding for the sake of peace, and of an easy disposition. If you have business with a community, it makes a point of conscience to treat you rigorously. I am ashamed to say it — I speak it only groaning and in secret — I only whisper it in the ear to instruct the spouses of Jesus Christ; but I am obliged to say it, for unhappily it is true: There are none more easily offended, more difficult, more tenacious, more ardent in lawsuits, than those who ought not even to have any business affairs. Mean and contracted hearts! can it be in the school of Christianity that you have been formed?" [37]

In sight of these revelations, and of so many other incontestable proofs of an inveterate evil, we are unavoidably led to put to ourselves a melancholy question: How did the Church allow herself to be consumed by that lamentable decay? Why did she not intervene with her divine authority to save this precious portion of her inheritance? This is, I will venture to say, the darkest and most unaccountable page of her history — that fatal indulgence can never be sufficiently regretted. The most energetic remedies, the most inexorable severities, would scarcely have sufficed to arrest that cancer. What, then, could come of contrivances and inaction? It was necessary to meet this plague with fire and sword. No means should have been neglected of preventing by radical and inexorable reforms that disgraceful and universal fall which was to inflict an irreparable injury

[37] Strict justice requires that we oppose to this sad picture one which Fenelon himself has drawn of the fervor and regularity which reigned among the Carmelites: "Behold the daughters of Theresa; they lament for all sinners who do not lament for themselves, and arrest the vengeance which is ready to fall. They have no longer eyes for the world, nor the world for them. Their mouths only open for sacred songs, and, except in the hour of praise, all flesh is here silent before the Lord. Tender and delicate frames bear even in extreme old age, with the penitential sackcloth, the burden of labor. Here my faith is consoled; here is seen a noble simplicity, a liberal poverty, a cheerful penitence, sweetened by the anointing of the love of God. Lord, who hast assembled Thy brides upon the mountain to pour forth in the midst of them a river of peace, keep them there gathered under the shadow of Thy wings; show to the vanquished world those whom they have trampled under foot. Alas! smite not the earth, whilst Thou still findest there the precious remnant of Thine election." — *Sermon pour la Fête de Sainte Thérèse*, Œuvres, t. xvii. p. 264, ed. Lebel. He says elsewhere — "The imperfections of the cloister which meet with such contempt, are more innocent before God than the most shining virtues to which the world does honor." — *Sermon pour la Profession d'une Religieuse.*

upon the Christian republic; and nothing was seriously attempted! Let no one tell me of the immense obstacles which the Church would have encountered in the interested opposition of temporal power, in the cupidity of the aristocracy, in the laxness of the clergy, and their too frequent and close complicity with the evil. Since her existence began she has always encountered such obstacles; and when she willed, and willed strongly, has always braved and surmounted them. All the reforms — even the most laborious, such as those of St. Theresa and of Rancé — ended in success, they all won the approval even of worldly opinion. They only required to be perpetuated, propagated, and imposed, by supreme authority. The popes, it is true, no longer exercised throughout Europe the ascendency which they had in the middle ages. However, it is difficult to believe that in the sixteenth century, or even in the seventeenth, a vigorous and prolonged effort of the Holy Chair, supported by the episcopacy, would not have succeeded, if not in extirpating all the roots of the evil, at least in arresting its growth, repressing its excesses, and, above all, in exciting the zeal of the good monks and the sympathy of the faithful people and orthodox princes. Louis XIV. himself, who showed so much sympathy for the individual and partial enterprise of Rancé, would not have refused his support to a more extensive reform, originating in a higher quarter. Perhaps even in the eighteenth century the attempt would have succeeded. In any case it was well worth undertaking.

I know and admire the generous but partial endeavors of St. Charles Borromeo, of St. Francis of Sales, of the first Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld. I am not the less compelled to say, that we seek in vain in the annals of the Church, since the Council of Trent, for a great and energetic effort against the evil, or even for a generous and resonant appeal, destined to awaken all hearts, to show the danger, to point out the abyss, and to excite to resistance. That the bishops, and even the greatest among them, should have ended by remaining passive witnesses of so many scandals, may be, if not justified, at least explained, by the abuse of exemptions, which had disarmed and set them aside from all intervention in the life of the communities. But how shall we explain, that, among so many good popes, not one was found to refuse the bulls which delivered the honor and possessions of the most celebrated monasteries to persons notoriously unworthy, such as Bussy d'Amboise, and the Abbé

Dubois? How shall we explain that all of them have left that purulent plague to eat deeper and deeper, until the day of irremediable ruin?

To this formidable question there is, however, one answer. The reform of the religious orders is scarcely more in the power of the Church than their foundation. The Church has never directly founded one religious order. The fact is incontestable. To found a religious order, there are required men specially raised and destined by God to that work, a Benedict, a Francis, a Dominic, an Ignatius. The Church approves and encourages such men, but does not create them by an authoritative act. And could it be otherwise with reform, which is, perhaps, still more difficult than foundation?

Men were, then, required, and none were to be found. God had not given them, and the Church could not create them. Some appeared from time to time, but not enough for a grand, general, and definitive reform. Such was the reason why the religious orders were not reformed.

There remained, it is true, a remedy — the suppression of the greater part of these establishments. But the Church recoils before so extreme a cure. It suits her spirit to build; but to destroy is always infinitely repugnant to her. Is she wrong? She is always patient — some may, perhaps, think that she is too much so.

However that may be, the evil continued and increased, till at last it exhausted the patience of God himself. "Divine justice," says Bossuet, "avenges excesses by other excesses."[38] That which the Church left undone, was done by the crime of the world.

But we must never consent to absolve any crime, under pretext that its victims merited their fate.

"God's justice is often served by man's injustice,"[39] but it remains no less injustice.

"The universe," says M. de Maistre, and he has said nothing more true, "is full of penalties most justly inflicted on guilty men by executioners who are guiltier still."[40]

We will not deny that the monks — not all indeed, but too generally — were unfaithful to their duties, to their mission, and to their oaths; but did it belong to secular power, or, above all, to triumphant revolutions, to punish them? Were

[38] *Histoire des Variations*, liv. vii. p. 469.
[39] Madame Swetchine.
[40] Letter of 29th May, 1819.

the disorders, abuses, and scandals of which they are accused, and which are too often proved against them, a crime against social order, that they gave that right of repression, and even of suppression, which has been arrogated? No; the Church alone had the right of exercising against them her sovereign and infallible justice, and Christians only are entitled to mourn or complain that she did not exercise it in time. They know that God will demand a severe account of those who had betrayed that imprescriptible duty. But they know also that He will judge and chastise more severely still those who have completed that great immolation, not certainly with the view of regenerating these holy institutions, or of appeasing divine justice, but solely to gratify the most ignoble instincts of human passion.

Yes, reforms are necessary; and the absence or inefficacy of these reforms rendered the catastrophe possible and natural. But it does not follow that the wicked effort which cut the thread of monastic existence can ever be justified or excused. For never crime was more wicked or more insane. Montesquieu has justly stigmatized despotism, by comparing it to certain savages in America, who cut down their trees to gather the fruit. But what can we think of these modern savages, who, under pretext of pruning it and cleansing it, have laid low and uprooted that venerable tree which had sheltered for so many centuries, labor, knowledge, happiness, and prayer?

God preserve us, then, from becoming, in any degree whatever, the accomplices of those who have led on, prepared, or justified that catastrophe by their invectives or calumnies! To preserve us forever from such a danger, it is only necessary to remind ourselves what has been the impure source of these attacks, and the character of the accusers. Let us judge of the equity of the tribunals which have condemned the monks in the past by that of the processes entered against them in our own days, in Switzerland, in Spain, and in Piedmont, in the countries where they have survived the terrible trial of the French invasion, and profited by the Revolution. Let us weigh the contradictory reproaches which overwhelm them. If they are strict in observing their rule, it is said that they are behind their age; if they do not observe it, the same voices which insulted them as fanatics, exclaim against their laxness. If they manage their domains badly, these are taken away, under pretence that nothing is made of them; and if they

manage them well, they are still taken away, for fear they should become too rich.[41] If they are numerous, they are forbidden to receive novices; and when that state of things has reduced them to a handful of old men, having no successors, their patrimony is confiscated. It has always been thus, from Henry VIII. and Gustavus Vasa, down to our contemporary sophists of Turin and Berne. The religious orders have been specially reproached with corruption and uselessness only by those powers which would inherit their wealth, and who begin by condemning them to barrenness. Nothing was left for them to do, and then it is said that they did nothing.[42]

And more: almost all the vices which have first enfeebled and then dishonored monastic life, have resulted from the invasions of the lay spirit and temporal power in the government of monastic things. If discipline and austerity had perished, without hope of return, from many of the cloisters, was not that caused, as we have seen, by the introduction of the *commende?* and was not this odious and flagrant violation of the formal will of the founders, always solicited or imposed by princes? It is consequently as much by the covetousness and bad faith of lay power, as by the culpable weakness of pastors too docile to that power, that the work of charity became thus the prey of egotism and sensuality.

We shall see hereafter by what a series of encroachments, hindrances, and deceptions, many Catholic princes, aided by their law officers, attempted to wear out and weaken the religious spirit — the spirit of penitence and austerity, which is always a spirit of strength and liberty — in those cloisters, which at last seemed to breathe no other spirit than that of the world and of profane life.

But even now we have a right to say to the habitual detractors of the monks, who are at the same time the apologists of their proscription, Do you know what is the only reproach which you can justly address to them? It is that of resembling yourselves. What is this degradation, this sensuality, this *relâchement*, of which you accuse them as

[41] We only repeat the line of argument and conduct employed against the convents of Aargau from 1835 to 1845.

[42] Lorain, *Histoire de Cluny*, p. 14. The Abbey of Muri had offered, in 1837, to the canton of Aargau, to maintain a great school for classical and professional education; the cantonal government answered by a law, which interdicted all monks from teaching; after which it abolished the monastic community as useless to the state.

a crime, if not too exact a conformity to your own manner of life?

And from whence do these strange censors come? What? is it amidst the joys and freedom of secular life, its wealth and its leisure, that you have learned to judge so strictly the different degrees of mortification and austerity, of facts and vigils? Is there not enough in history of one Henry VIII., a king himself so temperate, so just, and so chaste, that he might well despoil and ruin monasteries, under pretext of punishing their incontinence and irregularity? Is it you, who perhaps have never been seen to bend the knee in a Christian temple since your childhood, who thus sit in judgment on the regularity of prayers and of the canonical office? Have you so scrupulously repressed in yourselves all the desires and weaknesses of the flesh, that you are entitled to weigh in the balance of the sanctuary the irregularities, more or less established, of certain monks? "Tell us your own efforts," said Bossuet to some rigorists of his time. Ah! if you would begin by trying the most relaxed rule, by constraining yourselves to follow the observance of the most degenerate order, you might ascend with some authority the tribunal of history, and your bitter censure would inspire some confidence. What! the Benedictines eat meat! the barefooted Carmelites wear shoes! the Cordeliers do not encircle their loins with a cord! Indeed! and you who accuse them, what have you done of all that? They do not practise discipline upon themselves so often as formerly. But how many times a week do you practise it? They do not devote so many hours to prayer and labor as they ought. But where are the fields which you have fertilized by your sweat, or the souls which you have saved by your supplications? After all, the most criminal, the most depraved, live only as you live: this is their crime. If it is one, it is not your part to chastise it. What! you taint the Church with your vices, and then you reproach her with being tainted and stained! You administer poison to your victim, and impute it to him as a crime when he succumbs to it! Ah! let the faithful, the zealous, and the pure, indignantly mourn the monastic downfall; let a Bernard, a Pierre Damien, a Charles Borromeo, a Francis de Sales, a Catherine of Sienna, a Theresa, denounce them to God and to posterity. That we can conceive. We could not, indeed, imagine them to be silent. But you, the heirs or panegyrists of the authors of that evil which has corrupted the monks, as well as of the

spoliation which they have sustained, — you ought to be the last to express astonishment or regret; for in so doing you pronounce judgment against your fathers, or against your own selves.

It is surely time to close the domain of history to these false philosophers, to this mean literature, to these base sycophants of oppression, who, bent on following in the train of the Vandals, endeavor still to tarnish the memory of those whom their predecessors have scarcely yet delivered from the axe of the headsman and the hammer of the destroyer.

Modern society, which has fattened on the spoils of the monastic orders, might content itself with that; their remains should not be insulted. Let it leave to Christians, to the apologists of the Religious life, to those who endeavor to re-establish it by purifying it from all recent dross, the task of denouncing in the past, in order to prevent the possibility of their return, those disorders which have degraded it. In the midst even of their degeneration, the most lawless monks have been guilty only in the eyes of God and the Church. Whatever may have been their sins against their own rule, against their condition, against their conscience, they have committed none against their fellow-creatures or against society.

Vain will be any endeavor to alter the distinctive character of their social historical part, which is that of having lived to do good. Humanly speaking, they have done nothing else: all their career is occupied with peopling deserts, protecting the poor, and enriching the world. Sadly degenerated towards their decline, much less active and less industrious than in their origin, they were never less charitable. Where is the country, where is the man, whom they have injured? Where are the monuments of their oppression? the memorials of their rapacity? If we follow the furrow which they have dug through history, we shall find everywhere only the traces of their beneficence.

And even if it had been otherwise in the time of their decay, might not we find in their glorious past overpowering claims upon the respect and consideration of posterity? Can we forget the shelter which was open during so many centuries to the newborn forces of Christendom? Shall that Christendom, matured and emancipated, use her vigor and liberty to dishonor the sacred cradles of her infancy? Ought not that long succession of acts of charity, courage, patience, magnanimous and persevering efforts against rebel-

lious nature and human weakness, of which the history of the first times of all the religious orders is composed, disarm injustice and ingratitude forever? Ought not all these accumulated labors, all these services rendered, all these benefits lavished on so many generations by the spiritual ancestors of the most obscure monasteries, have sufficed to assure to their successors the right common to all men, of peace, freedom, and life?

CHAPTER VIII.

RUIN.

They saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned, and the gates burnt up, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest or in one of the mountains. — 1 MACCAB. iv. 38.

BUT no! neither justice nor pity; neither recollection nor gratitude; neither respect for the past nor care for the future: such has been the law of modern progress when it has encountered these old and venerable remains upon its road. Hate and cupidity have spared nothing.

Of all the human institutions which have been assailed or overthrown by revolution, something has always endured. Monarchy, although weakened and shaken, has proved that it can reassume its ascendency. Nobility, although everywhere, except in England, annulled and degraded, still exists among us. Industrial and mercantile wealth has never been more powerful. The ancient monastic orders alone have been condemned to perish without return. The only one of all the institutions of the past which has been totally spoiled and annihilated is the most useful and the most legitimate of all — the only one which never had an abuse of strength or conquest of violence to reproach itself with, but which all the violences and tyrannies have joined hands to annihilate by the vilest of aggressions, that which kills in order to rob.

The torrents of lava vomited forth by Vesuvius and Etna have till now stopped and turned aside from the dwellings which the Camaldules and Benedictines have chosen for themselves upon the sides of these terrible craters. The moral volcano which has ravaged the Christian world with

its eruptions has had less discernment; it has carried away the whole. All has been swallowed up in the same ruin. It is not only in the towns, in the great centres of population, in contact with the strong currents of modern life, that this destruction has had its full course: it has marched through deserts and forests to seek its victims. There has been no solitude so profound, no mountain so precipitous, no valley so sequestered, as to balk it of its prey. It has regarded neither sex nor age. It has laid its hands upon the defenceless old age of the monk as well as upon the innocent and touching weakness of the nun; it has seized them both in their cells, expelled them from their lawful dwelling-place, robbed them of their patrimony, and cast them out as vagabonds and outlaws, without asylum and without resource, upon the world. Disciples of Christ, too often imperfect, but re-established and consecrated by an odious persecution, they have henceforth been able to say, with their Divine Master: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."[1]

To be thus put out of law, and under the ban of humanity, it is necessary that you should be the most ancient and constant benefactors of Christian society! And by what hands is this done? By the miserable power of a crew of sophists and calumniators, who in reality have done nothing for humanity — who have bestowed upon it, under the guise of a benefit, only an increase of pride, jealousy, and discord, — who have built nothing, preserved nothing; but who have begun to write their discourses with the venom of falsehood, who have signed their conclusions with blood, and whose theories all end in the strokes of the axe. Divine justice, for the most part, has already seized them. Some have learned to know, even in this world, that the wealth wrested from others is neither profitable nor satisfactory. More than one, before the end of his career, has had reason to envy the repose of those whose patrimony he had cruelly spoiled, and whose peace he had troubled.

And as if such wickedness by itself was not enough to bring down the vengeance of God, the forfeit was aggravated by all the details and all the circumstances of its execution. We find nowhere in history the record of a devastation more blind and brutal. What good man has not shuddered

[1] Matth. viii. 20.

at the sight, or even at the thought, of a ruin so vast and pitiless, of desolation so universal, of these remains which still lie around us, melancholy, polluted, and shapeless? What invasion of barbarians has ever annihilated and devoured at once so many admirable monuments, so many popular recollections, so many treasures of art and poetry, so many resources for public charity and the pressing necessities of the people? What an ignominious contrast between those ancient races, which thought only of building, enriching, and preserving, and the recent generations, which know only how to overthrow, to destroy, and to confiscate — between the fathers, who were always giving away, and the sons, who are always stealing the alms of their fathers!

However, throughout Europe, already so much dishonored by the ravages of the Reformation and the French Revolution, that ignoble impulse has still been prevalent since the commencement of our century. The licensed robbers of revolutionary spoliation, and those tame Vandals who did not even redeem their barbarous sacrilege by the savage energy of the French republicans, have continued, in Russia, in Spain, in Switzerland, and in Piedmont, the murderous work of Joseph II. and of the Constituent Assembly.

Not only amid the storms of a triumphant or struggling revolution, when the people in their delirium seem scarcely to be conscious of their crimes, have these acts been committed. No; it is in times of peace, and in direct contradiction to the wish of the population, that a sapient bureaucracy, eager to detect and chastise as a crime the least error in accounts, has been seen proceeding with methodical gravity to the work of spoliation, to a palpable and permanent violation to the rights of property. It is not the work of foreign conquerors, nor even revolutionary hordes; it is too often the crowned descendants, the old founders and benefactors, the governments, regular, pacific, and recognized by all, who have raised destruction into a system, and prefaced it by confiscation.

The son of Maria Theresa suppressed in his states a hundred and twenty-four monasteries, and confiscated their goods, valued at more than two hundred millions of florins; which has not prevented his empire from being three times bankrupt since then. But even during our own lifetime it has been calculated that in five years, between 1830 and 1835, three thousand monasteries have disappeared from the soil of Europe. In the kingdom of Portugal alone, three hun-

dred were destroyed under the regency of Don Pedro. I am not aware that the number of those which Queen Christina annihilated in Spain by a single dash of her pen, has yet been estimated.[2] Two hundred others were drowned in the blood of Poland[3] by that Muscovite autocracy which always maintains so perfect an understanding with the democrats of the rest of Europe to enchain and despoil the Church.

To annihilate thus *en masse* these venerable retreats, which for so many centuries have furnished a shelter to the most precious monuments, and a sanctuary to the dearest recollections, of all the nations of Christendom, implies an avowed and practical contempt for all that men have hitherto respected and loved. This has not been wanting. The desecrators of monasteries have not hesitated to outrage the glory, heroism, and holy traditions which are essential to national life and independence, in order to reach more effectually the men and things of God. What the atheistical Republic dared to do in France under the Terror, the Protestant monarchy had already done in England. Henry IV. and Louis XIV. were not the first kings whose remains had been profaned and scattered by the destruction of cloisters. The body of King James IV. of Scotland, killed in defence of his country,[4] was disinterred and decapitated by workmen, after the confiscation by Henry VIII. of the abbey whither his noble remains had been carried.[5] The bones of Alfred the Great met with no more respect, when the last remnants of the monastery which he had founded for his own sepulchre[6] were removed to give place to a prison. The most popular memories have found no more grace than the most obscure cenobites. Neither Richard Cœur de Lion nor Blanche of Castile have been able to protect Fontevrault or Maubuisson from the common fate.

The heroes who slept under the guard of the monks have had the same fate as the kings. The ashes of the Cid have been carried away from the confiscated monastery of St. Pierre de Cardenas, which he had chosen for his tomb, and where he left his Ximena when he went into exile, tearing

[2] In 1835, after the *enlightened* people of Madrid had burned alive some Jesuits in their convent.

[3] The Emperor Nicholas I. destroyed 187 by his ukase of the 31st July 1841.

[4] At the battle of Flodden, in 1513.

[5] At Sheen, near Windsor.

[6] At Winchester.

himself from her "as the nail is torn from the finger."[7] The magnificent convent which Gonsalvo de Cordova founded in Grenada for the Jeronymites has been changed into barracks, the church into a magazine, and the sword of that great captain, till then suspended before the high altar, taken down and sold by auction![8]

These wretched devastators have not even spared the memorials of human love, purified by the peace of the cloister and the prayers of the monks, but which the barbarous enlightenment of our days has confounded, in brutal blindness, with the relics of faith and penitence. The tomb of Heloise has been destroyed at Paraclet, as well as that of Laura among the Cordeliers of Avignon; and the body of Inez de Castro, confided by the unpitying grief of Pedro of Aragon to the sons of St. Bernard,[9] has been snatched from its royal mausoleum to be profaned by the soldiers.[10]

But even in confiscating the secular abbeys, and condemning their peaceful inhabitants to exile or death, the ruins at least might have been preserved; still, as in England and Germany, we might have been permitted to behold in their funereal beauty, some remains of those monuments of inimitable art and sublime architecture. But the modern Vandals have improved upon the example given them by the pretended reformers of three centuries ago. In Spain, in Portugal, and, above all, in France, the art of destruction has reached a perfection unknown to the most barbarous of our ancestors.

Among us it has not been enough to pillage, to profane, and to confiscate; it has been necessary to overthrow, to raze, not to leave one stone upon another. What do I say?

[7] *Poema del Cid.* — See the delightful masterpiece of Ozanam, entitled, *Un Pélerinage au Pays du Cid.*

[8] In 1835, and for the sum of *three francs*, according to the Spanish journal *Heraldo*, of January 1844. This monastery, one of the most magnificent edifices of Grenada, had at first been constructed by Gonsalvo for a palace. King Ferdinand, the Catholic, having gone to visit him there, said to him, sharply, "This palace is more splendid than mine." "True, Sire," responded Gonsalvo, "and it is destined for a greater lord than you, for I give it to God." I quote the tradition as it was related to me at Grenada in 1843, by a colonel of cavalry who superintended the grooming of the horses of his regiment, under the admirable cloisters due to the generosity of the great captain.

[9] At Alcobaça.

[10] Let us add, for our greater shame, that these soldiers were Frenchmen hired by Don Pedro. The hair of Inez of Castro, stolen from her violated tomb, is in the house of an amateur of Paris. In another house are shown the bones of Ximena!

to ransack the bowels of the earth that the last of these consecrated stones might be rooted out! . It has been said with too much truth,[11] that no nation has ever suffered herself to be thus despoiled by her own citizens of those monuments which best attested, in her own bosom, not only the culture of the arts and sciences, but the noblest efforts of thought and the most generous devotedness of virtue. The empire of the East has not been ravaged by the Turks as France has been, and still is, by that band of insatiable destroyers, who, after having purchased these vast constructions and immense domains at the lowest rate, work them like quarries for sacrilegious profit. I have seen with my own eyes the capitals and columns of an abbey church which I could name, employed as so much metal for the neighboring road. Color-sellers who should remove with a palette-knife the carmine or ultramarine from the pictures of Van Eyck or Perugino to increase the stores in their shops, could do no more.

In Asia Minor, in Egypt, and in Greece, there still remain, here and there, some fragments which the rage of the unbelievers has spared, some celebrated places where the pious ardor of the pilgrim and the curiosity of the erudite can still satisfy themselves. But in France and in the countries which imitate her,

"Tota teguntur
Pergama dumetis: etiam periere ruinæ."

Vandalism has only paused when there was nothing more to crumble down. Sometimes the very name and local recollection of monasteries which have peopled and put into cultivation the entire surrounding country are thus obliterated. Whilst a recondite erudition exerts itself to analyze the Etruscan or Pelasgic ruins, and falls into ecstasy before the least fragment of a Roman road, we have ignored for years the very site and new destination of such illustrious centres of virtue and Christian knowledge as Cluny, Citeaux, Fleury, and Marmoutier, and, still more so, of many other abbeys less celebrated, each of which, however, had its history, full of merits and services worthy of everlasting recollection.

"Vix reliquias, vix nomina servans
Obruitur, propriis non agnoscenda ruinis."

It is in maps and books of ancient geography that the sites of these admirable creations of faith and charity must

[11] De Guilhermy, *Annal. Archéol.*, i. 101.

be sought; too often it is vain to question the failing memory of the neighboring inhabitants, a race stupefied by incredulity and a frightful materialism. They reply to you as the Bedouins of the desert reply to the traveller who questions them of the genealogy of the Pharaohs or the annals of the Thebaid.

Elsewhere, it is true, these august sanctuaries remain standing, but only to be mutilated and metamorphosed, to be devoted by the hand of the spoiler to such a destination as shall inflict upon them an ineffaceable stain. Here it is a stable, there a theatre, in another case a barrack or a jail, which we find installed in all that remains of the most renowned abbeys. St. Bernard and his five hundred monks have been replaced at Clairvaux by five hundred convicts. St. Benedict of Aniane, the great monastic reformer of the time of Charlemagne, has not been more successful in turning away this outrage from the house of which, even in heaven, he bears the name. Fontevrault and Mont St. Michael have submitted to the same fate. These houses of prayer and peace have become what is called in our days *central houses of detention*, in order, no doubt, that they might not contradict M. de Maistre, who had said, "You will have to build prisons with the ruins of the convents which you have destroyed."[12]

Profanations still more revolting have been seen among us. At Cluny, the most illustrious monastery of Christendom, the church, which was the largest in France and in Europe, yielding in dimensions only to St. Peter's in Rome, after having been sacked and demolished, stone by stone, for twenty years, has been transformed into stud-stables,[13] and the start-

[12] Eysse, Beaulieu, Cadillac Loos, and other central prisons, are also ancient abbeys. The town of Limoges appears specially favored under this civilizing point of view: its central prison has been built on the site of the Abbey of St. Augustin-lez-Limoges, but with materials procured from the ruins of the chief abbey of the order of Grandmont, and its theatre is raised upon the site of the church of the monastery of St. Martial, the most ancient of Limousin. At Paris we see, in our own day, the theatre of the Pantheon installed in the recently destroyed church of St. Benedict, and a coffee-house in the choir of Prémontrés.

[13] Let us add, that Cambrom, one of the most celebrated foundations of St. Bernard in Belgium, has also served a long time as stud-stables to the Count Duval of Beaulieu, and that in 1845 the Abbey of St. Croix, at St. Lô, has been demolished, to make room for a depot of stallions. — *Bulletin Monumental*, t. xii. p. 295. Here are a list of other monasteries serving now as stud-stables since the budget of 1851: Braisne, Langonnet, Moutier-en-Der, Rosières, St. Maxient, St. Menehould, St. Pierre-sur-Dive, St. Nicolas de Caen. With regard to abbeys which, like Notre Dame of Saintes, or St. Germain of Compiègne, are now used as stables, they are innumerable.

ing-post of the stallions occupied still, in 1844, the place of the high altar.

Le Bec, the Christian academy immortalized by Lanfranc and St. Anselm, the cradle of Catholic philosophy, has been made useful in the same fashion. Why, indeed, should St. Anselm have found mercy for his abbey any more than Pierre le Venerable? Is it not thus that the sons of strength and fortune are accustomed to honor the great men of the past? Have not the Turks done the same with the places where Aristotle and Plato taught, and where Demosthenes spoke?

If a certain indignation mixes itself with the bitterness of these regrets, it may be pardoned to a man who has given up much of his time to seek, in almost all the countries of Europe, the vestiges of monastic grandeur and benevolence, and who, in his laborious course, has stumbled everywhere over the ruins accumulated by modern barbarism. He has studied with scrupulous attention the means employed to put the hoarded treasures of charity once more, as it is said, in circulation, and to restore the wealth of *Mort-main* to what is now regarded as life. He has collected the last recollections of old men, often octogenarians, who had seen the monks in their splendor and their freedom. He has sometimes reached the site of these sanctuaries just at the moment when the pick-axe of the destroyer was raised to break down the last arch of their churches. He has been denied admittance at the gate of the Chartreuse of Seville by a Belgian Vandal, who had built up therein a china manufactory. He has found swine installed by German Lutherans in the cells of *Nothgottes*,[14] and by French Catholics under the admirable sculptures of the cloister of Cadouin.[15] Thus he has learned that it is possible to meet with men whose voracious cupidity and impious grossness degrade them beneath the brute.

It is not so everywhere, I know. In many quarters industry has shielded these spoils from the destroying hammer for a time, that she might enthrone her speculations and manufactures there. In such a transformation nothing would seem more natural than to profit by the example and tradition recalled by these sacred places. A new and effective application of monastic principles might have been made, by prudent and continuous means, to the great gatherings of workmen who had replaced the monks, and to these grand

[14] God's Want, a convent of Nassau.
[15] Cistercian abbey in Perigord.

asylums of labor, where the regularity of the work, the morality of the workers, their intellectual satisfaction, and temporal and spiritual interests, assuredly require other guarantees than regulations purely material. But the world has remained insensible to the teachings of the past. With very rare exceptions,[16] the most undisguised materialism has everywhere replaced the lessons and recollections of spiritual life.

Upon the site of these monuments, created by disinterestedness and charity, or beside their ruins, there rises now some tame and ugly recent erection, designed to propagate the worship of gain, and, with it, the degradation of the soul. In the place of those communities where the dignity of the poor was so eloquently proclaimed, and where their sons walked hand in hand with the sons of kings and princes, the genius of cupidity has placed a kind of prison, where it too often exercises its ingenuity in finding out to what point it can drain away the strength of the artisan, reducing his wages by competition to the lowest possible rate, and his intelligence to its most restrained exercise, by the employment of machinery. Sometimes, also, the spinning-mill is installed under the roof of the ancient sanctuary. Instead of echoing night and day the praises of God, these dishonored arches too often repeat only blasphemies and obscene cries, mingling with the shrill voice of the machinery, the grinding of the saw, or the monotonous clank of the piston. And upon these doors, heretofore open to all, where charity kept unwearied watch, we read in great letters, *It is forbidden to enter here without permission;* [17] and this for fear the secrets of this profaning manufacture may be purloined by some inopportune visitor or greedy rival.

Not thus were marked the gates of those monasteries of old, which remained to their last day accessible to all; where,

[16] Among these it is our duty to point out the manufactory conducted by M. Peigné-Delacour, at the ancient Cistercian abbey of Ourscamp, near Noyon, and that of MM. Séguin and Montgolfier, at the Abbey of Fontenet, near Montbard: these gentlemen have succeeded in uniting an active solicitude for the moral and physical well-being of their workmen, with the most intelligent respect for the admirable ruins of which they have become proprietors.

[17] We will not instance certain ancient abbeys of France where that inscription is still to be read, since we have visited them in spite of the prohibition. But we may recall how at Netley, a Cistercian abbey near Southampton, whose admirable ruins are very much frequented, the following edifying and encouraging inscription may be read, *Those who do not follow the beaten path will be prosecuted.*

far from sending away the poor and the traveller, they feared no indiscreet look, no untimely visit, thanks to the sentiment of pious and fraternal confidence which reigned everywhere, and which dictated that inscription, perceived by us some years ago upon the door of one of the dependencies of the Abbey of Morimondo, near Milan,[18] *Entra, o passaggiere! e prega Maria, madre di grazia.*

And even where, as most frequently happens, it is the agricultural class which has indirectly inherited these fruits of spoliation, is there not room for grave reflections? Who could venture to deny the incontestable progress of well-being and independence among our rural populations since 1798? Who does not applaud and admire their freer and happier condition? Where shall we find a man so unnatural as not to enjoy doubly his own free patrimony, in thinking that upon this soil of France, of which the monks were the first cultivators, all his fellows can, and ought, to reach the same comfort, thanks to the results of their own free labor? Still further, who does not foresee, with a happy certainty, the increase of that general comfort, if no new storms or economic errors come to interrupt the regular and natural progress of things? But which of these aspects of modern progress was incompatible with a respect to the right of property among the monks?

The monks have everywhere been the founders and precursors of the progress and well-being of the agricultural classes, by the relative superiority of their culture, and at the same time by the facility, and especially the permanence, of the conditions which they offered to the workers of the soil. Enlightened and competent witnesses are unanimous in establishing the universally beneficent influence of monastic property upon the populations which depended on them. The moral decay and spiritual irregularity of these communities have never derogated from the distinctive character of their existence, not even in places where a melancholy attachment to obsolete usages made them still maintain the remnants of serfage, which, however, were much less odious in reality than in principle. Even under this pretended servitude, with which the eighteenth century, led by Voltaire, so much reproached the successors of the ancient monks of Jura,[19] the population subject to mortmain constantly in-

[18] The farm called *Casina Cantaluca di Ozero*, near the road from Abbiate Grasso to Pavia.

[19] See the definition which is given of it in the *Mémoires présentés au Roi*

creased, in spite of the sterility of the country, and the power, gauranteed to all, of seeking other masters.[20] "Experience teaches us," says an old historian, "that in the Country of Burgundy, the peasants of the places under mortmain are much more comfortable than those who inhabit the free lands, and that the more their families increase, the richer they grow."[21] "Generally," says an erudite Protestant of our own days, "there was more ease and prosperity among them, and their families multiplied with fewer obstacles, than in the other class of cultivators."[22] The same phenomenon has been remarked everywhere; in England, immediately after the suppression of monasteries in the sixteenth century,[23] as in Belgium, where during the eighteenth century, the Prémontrés created the agricultural prosperity of La Campine, by sending from the bosom of their abbeys, into all its parishes, curés who were, as says a historian of 1790, like so many professors of agriculture.[24] In Lombardy it was the monks, and principally the sons of St. Bernard, who taught the peasants the art of irrigation, and made that country the

contre le Chapitre de Saint Claude, pp. 7, 21, 32, 143. These pretended serfs were only the descendants of ancient colonists, who had obtained only a partial enjoyment of the funds granted to them by the monks. They were subject only to such restrictions as trustees and life-renters underwent everywhere.

[20] Edouard Clerc, *Essai sur l'Histoire de la Franche-Comté* (rewarded by the Institute), 1842, t. i. p. 307.

[21] Dunod, *Traité de la Main morte*, p. 15.

[22] Duvernoy (of Montbéliard), quoted by Charrière, *Recherches sur Romainmoutier*, p. 296. Lausanne, 1855. — This same author says also: "Certainly the *main-morte* is not so hideous as some would-be philosophers of the eighteenth century have wished to depict it: I have said repeatedly that the lot of this class has been envied by many men of their time simply liable to the land tax and statute labor. Personally, they were not less under the shield of those customs having the force of laws which governed inferiors, and their burdens and taxes were generally more supportable." He quotes elsewhere the celebrated passage from the letters of Peter the Venerable, where this doctor proves the difference between the lot of serfs subject to the monks, and those of the laity. Neither M. Duvernoy nor myself have the least intention of justifying the maintenance of any fragment whatever of serfage in the eighteenth century. But, to overthrow that, was it therefore necessary to dispossess and proscribe those who had created French agriculture?

[23] Collier, t. ii. p. 108, ap. *Dublin Review*, t. xvi. p. 259.

[24] Verhoeven, *Mémoire sur la Constitution de la Nation*, Belgium, Liége, 1790, p. 79. This author adds that, after the suppressions of Joseph II., he has seen various monasteries, such as *Auwerghem*, *Groenendael*, *Rouge-Cloître*, and *Sept-Fontaines*, become again literally dens of thieves as they had been before their foundation, as described in the diplomas of their benefactors. He says also that the suppression of the little priory of Corssendonck, situated in the poorest soil of Campine, has caused the poor peasants of the neighborhood to desert it, p. 102.

most fertile and rich in Europe.[25] In Spain and Portugal, all candid travellers, English or French, Protestants or free-thinkers, have not only recognized in monastic labor the principal origin of national agriculture, but have further proclaimed the constant prosperity of conventual lands, the excellence of the methods of culture there employed, their superiority in comparison with the domains of the crown or nobility, and, above all, the services rendered to the peasants by these industrious, persevering, and always resident proprietors, who consecrated the entire amount of their revenues to the working or to the improvement of their patrimony, and held the place of generous capitalists and indulgent lenders to the laborers of the country, in districts where capital was wanting, as it still is wanting in France, for agricultural enterprises.[26]

The low rate of the rents, which called and retained around each monastery agriculturists easy and prosperous, has been everywhere remarked upon monastic lands. Is it certain that these low rents have been maintained by their successors? Let us go further, and ask if it is certain, that the universal and permanent advantage of the inhabitants of the country has been consulted, in substituting everywhere for this rural ownership of the religious orders — always stable and never exacting (for there is not an example to the contrary), which resisted all attacks, and spread everywhere around it an increasing and enduring prosperity — the rapacity of individualism, the variations of industry, the mercantile and egotistic spirit of modern proprietorship, deprived even by the law which has consituted it of all foundation in the past, and every engagement towards the future? Again, it can enter into no one's intentions to rouse reaction against the fundamental institutions of modern society, to preach the universal re-establishment of great landed properties, or even of cultivation on a grand scale, and to generalize thus an order of things which, by its very nature, could and ought to be only exceptional. But must we absolutely refuse every asylum to the spirit of conservation, to the science of duration,

[25] Lavezarri, *Elementi d'Agricoltura*, Milano, 1784; Fumagalli, *Antichita Lombardo-Milanesi*, Milano, 1791, t. ii. dist. 13.

[26] See Cavanillas, *Observaciones sobre la Historia Natural del Regno de Valencia*, Madrid 1795, quoted by Gregory in his *Essay on the State of Agriculture in Europe;* Bourgoing, *Tableau de l'Espagne*, t. iii.; but above all, the work entitled *Portugal and Galicia*, by the Earl of Caernarvon, an English peer, one of the men who have best seen and studied the Peninsula during the stormy years from 1820 to 1828.

and proscribe without exception all these oases of peace and disinterestedness? Must we render compulsory everywhere that circulation and division of the soil, which, pushed to extremity, destroys even the domestic heart of one generation before it has had time to renew itself, and which, in a wider sense, teaches man only too easily how human society reduces itself into dust, and how property may have no aim or rule save the art of drawing out of it, without measure or relaxation, all that it will produce?

But let us suppose all these questions resolved against us: still we may at least inquire whether the mind most entirely satisfied by this manifest progress in material things, does not pause, doubtful and uncertain, when seeking an analogous progress in the morality and even intelligence of the population which has succeeded that which surrounded the cloisters. There are, thank Heaven, exceptions everywhere: but if we inquire into the state of souls — if we sounded the consciences or scrutinized the intelligence of the people who have replaced the monks, what should we too often find there? Would it not be an ignorance of God, of the soul, of a better life and of eternity, too general and voluntary? an absorbing preoccupation in the lowest functions of human vitality? a wild application of the faculties of the soul to lucre? the exclusive worship of material instincts and profits? Upon this point, I fear, the testimony of bishops and rural priests would be as unanimous as indisputable. No, the rural classes have not gained in morality as they have increased in laborious comfort and legitimate independence. Alas! the dishonored ruins of the monuments which we regret are often but too faithful an image of ruined consciences and ruined souls.

We can then affirm, without fear, that modern society has gained nothing, either morally or materially, by the savage, radical, and universal destruction of monastic institutions. Has intellectual culture profited more? Let us inquire where the taste for literature and study, the pursuit of the beautiful and true, the pure and upright knowledge, the true light of the mind, exists now in those places heretofore occupied by the monks, where they had been first to carry the torch of study and knowledge to the bosom of the plains, to the depths of the woods, to the summits of the mountains, and even into so many towns which owe to them all they have ever known of literary or scientific life. What remains of so many palaces raised in silence and solitude for the products of art,

for the progress and pleasure of the mind, for disinterested labor? Masses of broken wall inhabited by owls and rats; shapeless remains; heaps of stones and pools of water. Everywhere desolation, filth, and disorder. No more studious retreats, no more vast galleries full of rich collections, no more pictures, no more painted windows, no more organs, no more chants, no more libraries above all! no more of books than of alms and prayer!

And what have the poor gained by it? The reply is too easy and too painful. That they have reaped no advantage becomes specially apparent in those sites where we would fain invite the destroyers and detractors of the monastic orders to discuss with them the value of their work. In places where once was found a refuge, an hospice, an hospital, a fireside always open and always bright for all miseries and all weaknesses; where, at the end of a hard day's journey or work, the evening bell announced to the poor and fatigued traveller a benevolent and assured [27] reception, what do we find to-day? One of three things: most frequently a ruin, without either shelter or consolation for any one; sometimes a private dwelling closely shut up, where there is nothing either to receive or to demand; at the best, an inn, where it is necessary to pay for everything.

But, above all, what has been gained by the State, by the public power, whose irresistible name and arm have everywhere consummated the outrage conceived and calculated by private hate and avarice. Admitting, for a moment, the right of the State to seize upon private property, the most sacred and inviolable property; supposing it, by a possible agreement with the Church, legitimate master of these immense spoils; and placing ourselves at a point of view merely political and material, how shall we justify the use it has made of them? How shall we explain those sales, made bit by bit, for ridiculous prices — that instantaneous and barren crumbling down of so much solid, durable, and fertile capital — otherwise than by the imaginary necessity and wicked determination to identify the cause of revolution with new interests and individual covetousness? I appeal to all econ-

[27] In Germany, especially, where travelling has always been more than elsewhere a national habit with the lower classes, monasteries afforded them gratuitous inns. We saw even lately, in the profaned enclosure of Wessobrunn, in Bavaria, dormitories divided into small rooms, and reserved, some for poor students, others for poor workmen who came there to sleep. See upon that transformation an excellent work in the *Feuilles Politiques et Historiques* of Goerres and Phillips, vol. xxiii. p. 821.

omists worthy of the name, to all who have managed public affairs or seriously studied great social questions: was this what should have been done? Should not an attempt have been made to put aside these enormous common funds for public necessities and general interests? The orphans, the deserted foundlings, the poor lunatics, the deaf and dumb, the blind, the old sailors, the old field-laborers, the old soldiers of labor and industry, so many different miseries which modern civilization creates or discovers every day, and which she owes it to herself to take in charge, because she has everywhere enervated the freedom and the initiative of private charity, — had not they acquired a claim upon these treasures amassed by the charity of the past?

But no! Hatred of the past, blind hatred of all that endures, of all that comes from afar, of all that has a sacred origin, has swept away all the calculations of foresight, and the well-understood interests of the State, as well as those of the laborious and indigent masses. They have preferred to slay at a blow the goose of the golden eggs! They have destroyed the capital of ages, the inviolable trust of Christian nations, of charitable families, of knowledge, labor, and virtue. By the same blow has the future been sacrificed and the past calumniated. And they hold themselves justified by declamations upon *Mort-main*, that is to say, upon that immortal hand which has given life to the most durable and fertile creations of Christian genius.

Let us admit even that the crime or blindness of the destroyers of the sixteenth or eighteenth century might find an excuse or explanation; there is none for those who, after the cruel experiences which contemporary Europe has passed through, and in presence of the menaces of the future, persevere in the same course.

By what madness could we explain the renewal of persecution and prohibition against the new germs, born again, but still so few and feeble, of cloistral life? against the only men who, in our society, would be content with their lot; who would use their liberty only to abdicate all ambition and lucre, and seek, as the height of their desires, abstinence, mortification, and voluntary poverty, while all around them resounds with the glorification of wealth and of the flesh?

Yet how much have we seen, for some years past, in France and everywhere around us, even in Spanish America, of these mad persecutors, less intelligent and more perverse even than their predecessors, who aggravate unceasingly their

ignorant hatred and obsolete calumnies to obtain new proscriptions! How many politicians, legislators, and magistrates could we name, who have obstinately maintained a cruel interdiction, aided by annoyances derived at the same time from the Roman tax-gatherers and the Spanish Inquisition, against all the attempts of Christian devotedness to re-establish the cloistral life! Incapable themselves of the least sacrifice for God, they madly pursue those who demonstrate, by their example, that such sacrifices are still possible; they would fain banish for ever into the past, as a dream and aberration, such fidelity to evangelical counsels.

It is the *esprit de corps*, the vitality of association, that force, increased tenfold by a life in common, which the Church has always produced, and in which she always renews herself, that they specially pursue in her. It is for this, above all, that they set themselves to confine and thwart her. They are willing to let her live, but to live mutilated. They treat her like a prisoner of war, like a captive garrison, whom they divest of their arms and banners, to make them pass under the caudine forks.

Hypocritical advocates of a liberty which they have never understood, they proscribe the supreme act of liberty. "What folly and cruelty!" said St. Peter Damien eight hundred years ago: "a man has the power of disposing freely of his goods, but he shall not have that of offering himself to God! He has a right to give up all his fortune to other men, and they refuse him the liberty of giving up his soul to God, from whom it came!"[28]

I stood in Grenada one day, in the Albaycin, at the gate of the convent of *Santa Isabel la Real*, founded by Isabella the Catholic, in memory of her conquests, still occupied by its noble inhabitants, but condemned to self-extinction, the dictatorship of Espartero having interdicted them, as well as all the other convents in Spain, from receiving novices. A woman approached and explained to me that savage interdict: then, extending her hand towards the condemned convent, and

[28] "Quæ est illa dementia, quæ vesania, quæ crudelitas! Habet homo disponendarum rerum suarum liberam facultatem, ut semetipsum Deo offerat potestatem non habet! Valet hominibus tradere substantiam suam, non habet libertatem Deo reddere animam suam!" — S. Petr. Damian., *Opusc.* 15. This saint certainly did not foresee that they would come one day to proscribe, in Catholic countries, the practice of monastic life. He addressed these words to bishops, who wished only to exempt from the vow of embracing religious life those who might have done it believing themselves mortally ill, and who should afterwards be restored to health.

flashing on it one of those burning glances which cannot be forgotten, she exclaimed, with the accent of a Roman and the ardor of a Spaniard, these two words, *Suma tirania!* She was right: tyranny has invented nothing more oppressive than this stifling of devotion, chastity, and charity in the human soul. Let us believe, for the honor of the human species, that posterity will repeat that sentence, and define by the two words of the indignant Spanish woman the policy and justice of these comedians of liberty, when they shall stand finally unmasked before its eyes.

Besides, the Son of God has already pronounced their sentence: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in."[29]

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRUE AND FALSE MIDDLE AGES.

Primam esse historiæ legem, ne quid falsi dicere audeat; deinde ne quid veri non audeat. — CICERO, *De Orat.*, iii. 15.

BUT let us leave, for a time, these memorials of ruin and oppression. It is neither the decay nor the fall; it is the youth and flourishing maturity of the monastic order that we have to relate. This narrative carries us into, and will detain us long in, the bosom of that grand era of the middle ages, which is the perpetual object of opinions so impassioned and diverse. In the time of its greatest splendor the monastic order was only one of the branches of that great Christian society, governed by the Church and the feudal system, which has reigned successively in all the countries of the West, from Gregory the Great down to Joan of Arc.

We are necessarily led to study and appreciate this vast conjunction of Christian institutions, doctrines, and manners, when we approach the history of the religious orders; and we feel the necessity of rendering to it also complete and definitive justice. But here, as elsewhere, profound admiration, deliberate and avowed, does not exclude the most complete and

[29] Matth. xxiii. 13.

severe impartiality. God forbid that we should imitate our adversaries, those men who hate and denounce the preponderance of Catholic faith and truth in the middle ages! God preserve us from forgetting or concealing the sombre and vicious side of that period, from proclaiming only its splendors and virtues, and from turning thus against its detractors the disloyal and lying method which they have used so long, of keeping silent upon all its grand and noble features, and pointing out to the execration of posterity only its abuses and disorders. To be impartial it is necessary to be complete. To show only the vices of a human creature, or a historic period, is to betray truth; but it is equally so to show nothing but the virtues.

The most important point is, to distinguish carefully between the middle ages and the epoch which followed, and which is commonly called the *ancien régime;* and to protest against the confusion which ignorance on one side, and on the other the policy of absolutism, has introduced between two phases of history totally different, and even hostile to each other. To believe, for example that the fourteen centuries of our history which preceded the French Revolution, have developed only the same class of institutions and ideas, is to go in the face of truth and fact. The *ancien régime,* by the triumph of absolute monarchy in all the kingdoms of the European continent, had slain the middle ages: but instead of rejecting and trampling under foot the robes of its victim, it adorned itself with them, and was still thus arrayed when it came, in its turn, to be overthrown. Time and space fail us to insist upon this truth, which becomes more and more evident, in proportion as the paths of history are cleared from all those errors with which superficial writers have encumbered them. But it is important to free the true middle ages, in their Catholic splendor, from all affinity with the theory and practice of that renewed old pagan despotism which still here and there contends with modern liberty; and this distinction should be specially recalled in presence of all those historic phantasmagoria which, after having so long assimilated the kings of the middle ages to modern monarchs, exhibiting Clovis and Dagobert to us as princes of the fashion of Louis XIV. and Louis XV., have all at once turned round, and attempt to make us regard Louis XIV. and Philip V. as the natural and legitimate representatives of St. Louis and St. Ferdinand. An attentive study of facts and institutions will convince every sincere observer that

there is less difference between the order of things destroyed in 1789 and modern society, than between the Christianity of the middle ages and the *ancien régime.*

That *ancien régime* corrupted, enslaved, and often despoiled all that it had not killed, and the religious orders suffered that fate as much as, or more than, any other institution of Christianity.

It is not necessary to go far back to find a time in which all the great social forces, even those whose roots penetrate furthest into the Catholic middle ages, and which the modern mind is accustomed to confound with that period, were unanimous in disavowing any sympathy or affinity with the previous age, and in which the intelligence of that age, withdrawing from them, abandoned them, discrowned and disarmed, to the perils of the future. It was then that the throne, misled by servile lawyers and historians, renounced the Christian humility of the kings of the middle ages; that the nobility, unfaithful to the traditions of their furthest back and most illustrious ancestors, sought their glory and life only in the royal favor; that the clergy themselves blushed for the ages, named *barbarous* by their own writers, in which, however, the Church had been so strong and flourishing, so free and so respected, so well obeyed and loved. Yes, ignorance, or, if you prefer it, historical carelessness, had so infected even the sanctuary, that the clergy, exclusively preoccupied with wrongs and disorders, which we should be careful not to deny, did not hesitate to sacrifice the highest glories of their order to the rancor and prejudices of the world. It must be said, in order to verify all that we have gained; in everything which concerns the most heroic struggles of the Church during nearly two centuries, we had accepted on their own word the lies of our tyrants, and had served as their echo. Multitudes of Christians, of priests, of Catholic doctors were to be found, who, ranging themselves with enthusiasm on the strongest side, had taken the part of evil against good, and transformed lay tyranny into an innocent victim of the Church. It is scarcely a hundred years since French bishops expressed in their charges the wish to see *the enterprises of Gregory VII. buried in eternal oblivion!*[1] Fleury, so long the oracle of ecclesiastical history, put his vast knowledge and incontestable talents at the service of the enemies of Rome, and dared to say, in begin-

[1] Charges of the Bishops of Verdun and Troy, in 1728.

ning his description of the ages which intervened between St. Benedict and St. Bernard, that *the great times of the Church are past.*[2] Whilst Voltaire decreed the untoward tribute of his praises to such decisions,[3] no one, in France, at least, ventured openly to combat them. We must even admit that it is not the clergy who have given to history that new and salutary impulse which has animated it for forty years, and served the cause of the Church so well. They have rather suffered, than inspired, the vindication of the middle ages. That work, so indispensable to the honor and enfranchisement of Catholicism, has been begun by Protestants,[4] by indifferent persons, sometimes even by declared adversaries. It has been specially carried out by laymen.[5] Perhaps it is by some secret and beneficent purpose of supreme Truth that the profane, and men who are strangers to the true faith, have been the first and most ardent to study and admire those great and profoundly Catholic ages.

But perhaps, also, it is to the absence and silence of the clergy in the beginning of this unforeseen and brilliant return to historic truth, that we must attribute the untoward character which has diminished its value in the eyes of many pious Christians. In giving up to the poets, artists, and novelists the exclusive right of using, with no very exalted purpose, the treasures of an age in which the Church governed and inspired everything, Catholics have permitted the study of the middle ages to degenerate into a kind of fashion,

[2] Discourses on the state of the Church from 600 to 1100.

[3] He has said of Fleury: "His history of the Church is the best that has ever been written, and the preliminary discourses are very much superior to history." It is true Fleury has not yet been surpassed as a historian of the Church, but he understood absolutely nothing of the social and moral constitution of the Christian people of the middle ages. His influence has notwithstanding outweighed every other in France as out of it; and I would only quote one curious example of it, that of an English Catholic priest, Dr. Berington, author of a *Literary History of the Middle Ages*, reprinted in 1846, who treats the Crusades as a *contagious extravagance*, and declares that the only result of them has been the importation to the West of Oriental fables, from which the imagination of bard and troubadour had been able to draw new aliment.

[4] In France, M. Guizot; in Germany, Jean de Müller, Voigt, Leo, Hurter, the two Menzels.

[5] The best book to make the middle age known and loved, is the work of a layman, and of a layman gone over from Anglicism to the Church. It is the collection already quoted, and entitled *Mores Catholici, or the Centuries of Faith*, by Kenelm Digby, London, 1831 to 1843, 10 volumes. It is right to acknowledge that the defective aspect of the middle ages (what the Germans so justly call *die Schattenzeite*) has not been sufficiently brought to light by Mr. Digby. Read on this subject the sage reflections of the excellent American writer, Brownson, in his *Quarterly Review*, Boston, July, 1849.

exaggerated and ephemeral, a frivolous and puerile rage for its furniture, statues, and stained glass, parodying the exterior, the costume, and the language of a time, whose fundamental characteristics these explorers affect to ignore, and whose faith, especially, they will neither profess nor practise. How few among us have approached the middle ages with that tender and profound respect which should conduct us to the sepulchre of our ancestors, to the monuments of their glory, to the cradle of our spiritual and moral life! Perchance it might be better to let that past sleep, under the dust and disdain with which modern paganism has covered it, than to resuscitate it for the fitting out of a museum.

However this may be, a great progress is manifest, and continues every day. The study of the middle ages has become more and more general, serious and popular. Its historical vindication progresses, and works itself out. Those who, first among the Catholics, put their hands to this task five-and-twenty years ago, having due reason for congratulation. At that time much courage was necessary to brave prejudices which were universal, and to all appearance invincible, and bold perseverance to overcome the scorn of ignorance and routine, and some perspicacity to divine that the wind was about to change, and that its breath would rekindle the true light. The hands of enemies have themselves largely contributed to that unhoped-for victory. Illustrious adversaries of Catholicism have popularized periods, races, and personages which last century had condemned to eternal scorn and oblivion. Penetrating into the catacombs of history, they have dug and cleared out many unknown or lost ways, and have brought back inestimable materials for the work of reparation. Perhaps they expected to have sealed the tomb of their victim for the last time under these stones, which serve every day to reconstruct the sanctuary of historic truth.

Thanks to them, above all, we know now what to believe concerning the *barbarity of the middle ages*, *feudal anarchy*, and most of the invectives cast upon the Christian society by accusers who have designedly forgotten or misconceived her first motives. With Catholics, especially, the revolution is complete; among them we scarcely find sufficient opposition to verify the triumph. They have taken up again the sentiment of their historical honor and patrimony. But how many efforts and struggles are still necessary against the ocean of vulgar prejudices, against the decision of hate and

voluntary ignorance! Amongst the clergy as amongst laymen, many industrious writers continue a task which we must beware of believing achieved. The legitimate and imprescriptible insurrection of truth against error is not the work of a day, and a victory so desirable cannot be achieved so quickly or so perfectly. We require to have our arsenal filled every day with the serious arguments and irrefutable demonstrations of honest knowledge, and we help to reconquer our forgotten glories when we increase the riches of historical truth.

Meanwhile, though there is still much remaining to be done for the consolidation of that conquest and arrangement of its riches, we already see the result compromised by that disastrous fickleness which belongs to the French character, and which extends even into the sphere of religion! Men have passed from one excess to another, from one pole of error to the opposite pole, from a contempt founded upon ignorance, to a blind, exclusive, and no less ignorant admiration. They have made an imaginary *moyen age*, in which they have placed the ideal of those daring theories and retrograde passions, which have been brought to light by the downfalls and recantations of our last times. The school of literature which has launched a decree of proscription against the great works of classic antiquity, comes to swell the ranks of that school of politics which has returned with a desperate confidence towards force as the best ally of faith, which has placed religion and society under that humiliating guardianship, and which takes a perverse pleasure in crushing human conscience and human dignity under strange and insupportable pretensions. Disdaining the reality of facts, and of all the authentic monuments of the past, both take delight in seeking weapons against the rights of reason and of freedom, in recollections of those middle ages which their own imagination has falsified; and both have slandered the Christendom of our ancestors, by representing it as the model of that intellectual and social condition of which they dream, and which they preach to the modern world.

And immediately, by a natural reaction, the old prejudices and declamations against the ages of faith have regained life and favor. The ill-extinguished and scarcely disguised animosity of those who yielded to the laws of recent impartiality rather from regard to good taste than from conviction, blazes up anew. To the indignation excited in many minds by the reawakening of those helots who were supposed to be re

signed and habituated to the abnegation of their ancient glory and liberty, is added the natural uneasiness of all who rely upon the legitimate conquests and progress of modern intelligence. By combining the vindication of the middle ages with the apotheosis of contemporary servitude, a horror of the Catholic past has been reanimated, strengthened, and, in appearance, justified. The cause which seemed to be gained is once more put in question, and even in risk of being lost again. Passion and hatred have again found a pretext and refuge — they constitute themselves the auxiliaries of betrayed liberty, menaced conscience, and reason outraged and justly alarmed.[6]

The laborious and conscientious worker in this great and good cause has thus too often good reason to pause, sad and discouraged, when he perceives the volcano which he had supposed extinguished re-open, to throw forth, as heretofore, calumny and outrage against the truth; but sadder still when he sees that truth condemned, by superficial and rash apologists, to an unworthy alliance with baseness, fear, and voluntary blindness. These last have cruelly complicated the task of the upright man, who would defend and avenge the truth without becoming the accomplice of any persecution or servitude. Perhaps he is not warranted in saying to them, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of;" but he is at least entitled to establish the fact that he is not, and never was, of their camp; that he neither follows the same path nor bears the same flag. He would willingly speak with the prophet of "the wall between me and them."[7] For there are times when it is needful that he should separate himself, with the melancholy and resolution of the patriarch when he said to his nearest relative, "Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."[8]

[6] "Those infamous middle ages, the disgrace of civilization and dishonor to the human mind." — *Journal des Debats* of the 27th November, 1854. "When we see a spirit which is nourished by rancor and hatred against liberty, progress, and tolerance, show itself among certain persons in a certain party, who shelter themselves under cover of the good old times, we ask ourselves whether it would not be better to abstain from all demonstration of sympathy for manners, usages, and institutions which are condemned to suffer such a patronage and such friends." — *Revue de l'Instruction Publique* of the 11th December, 1856. "His ideal was not in this legendary demi-day gray and sombre, in which the thin and wan figures of the middle ages move." — *Revue Chrétienne* of the 15th November, 1859.

[7] Ezek. xliii. 8.

[8] Gen. xiii. 9.

The middle ages stand unfortunately between two camps at the deepest enmity with each other, which only agree in misconstruing it. The one hate it, because they believe it an enemy to all liberty: the others praise it, because they seek arguments and examples there, to justify the universal servitude and prostration which they extol. Both are agreed to travesty and insult it, the one by their invectives, the others by their eulogiums.

I affirm that both deceive themselves, and that they are equally and profoundly ignorant of the middle ages, which were an epoch of faith, but also a period of strife, of discussion, of dignity, and, above all, of freedom.

The error common to both admirers and detractors of the middle ages consists in seeing there the reign and triumph of theocracy. It was, they tell us, a time distinguished forever by human impotence, and by the glorious dictatorship of the Church.[9]

I deny the dictatorship, and I still more strongly deny the human impotence.

Humanity was never more fertile, more manful, more potent; and as for the Church, she has never seen her authority more contested in practice, even by those who recognized it most dutifully in theory.

Unity of faith was the reigning principle then, as unity of civil law and national constitution is the reigning principle of the present time, in all modern nations. But among a free people, like England or the United States, where do we see that civil and social unity stifle the vitality, the energy, the individual and collective independence? It was thus with the Catholic unity of the middle ages. It quenched in no degree either political or intellectual life. The uniformity of a worship universally popular, the tender and sincere submission of hearts and minds to revealed truth and the teachings of the Church, excluded no prepossession for, no discussion of, the most elevated and difficult questions of philosophy and morality. The principle of authority implied no rupture, either with the free genius of antiquity, so faithfully and ardently cultivated (as we shall prove) in the Benedictine cloisters, nor with the natural and progressive development of the human mind. Need we recall the immense developments of scholasticism, those exercises of intelligence at once so bold and subtile, so propitious, despite their undeniable

[9] Donoso Cortès, *Réponse à M. Albert de Broglie*, in the Spanish edition of his works.

blanks, to the force and elasticity of argument? Need we enumerate those great, numerous, and powerful universities, so full of life, so free, sometimes even so rebellious, where the independence of the masters was equalled only by that of an ardent and turbulent youth, attacking every day a thousand questions, which would terrify the suspicious orthodoxy of our days? Need we adduce, finally, the liberty, and even license, of those satires, which, in the popular and chivalrous poetry, in fables and songs, even in the products of art which were consecrated to worship, carried almost to excess the right of public criticism and discussion? [10]

In those times so ridiculously calumniated, a devouring desire to work and to learn animated all minds. The heroic and persevering ardor which carried the Marco Polos and Plancarpins to the extremities of the known world, through distances and dangers which our contemporaries have lost the power of conceiving, inspired travellers not less intrepid in the regions of thought. The human mind exercised itself with Gerbert and Scotus Erigena in the most arduous and delicate problems. The most orthodox, such as St. Anselm and St. Thomas Aquinas, shrank before none of the difficulties of psychology or metaphysics. Some might be led astray into audacious theories, hostile to the spirit of the Church and the Gospel. But not an individual, we can affirm boldly, resigned himself to the abdication or slumber of reason.

Let us go further, and ask if, to-day, despite printing, despite the happy but insufficient progress of popular education, despite our apparent universal acquaintance with the sciences and arts, if it is entirely certain that the necessary equilibrium between material cares and the moral life of the world is as well maintained as then. Let us ask if the spiritual element of human nature, cultivation of ideas, moral enthusiasm, all the noble life of thought, is as well represented, as energetically developed, and as abundantly provided for among ourselves as among our ancestors. For my own part, I permit myself to doubt it; and I believe that, well considered and compared, no period has more richly

[10] See on this subject the curious book of M. Lenient, *La Satire en France au Moyen Age*, Paris, 1859; and the history *De la Fable Ésopique* of M. Edélestand du Méril, which serves as an introduction to his *Poésies Inedites du Moyen Age;* and, in short, all the recent volumes of the *Histoire Littéraire de France*, continued by the Academy of Inscriptions.

endowed and more ardently cultivated the domains of the mind and soul, than the middle ages.

Religion, it is true, governed all; but she stifled nothing. She was not banished into a corner of society, immured within the enclosure of her own temples, or of individual conscience. On the contrary, she was invited to animate, enlighten, and penetrate everything with the spirit of life; and, after she had set the foundation of the edifice upon a base which could not be shaken, her maternal hand returned to crown its summit with light and beauty. None were placed too high to obey her, and none fell so low as to be out of reach of her consolations and protection. From the king to the hermit, all yielded at some time to the sway of her pure and generous inspirations. The memory of Redemption, of that debt contracted towards God by the race which was redeemed on Calvary, mingled with everything, and was to be found in all institutions, in all monuments, and at certain moments in all hearts. The victory of charity over selfishness, of humility over pride, of spirit over flesh, of all that is elevated in our nature over all the ignoble and impure elements included in it, was as frequent as human weakness permitted. That victory is never complete here below; but we can affirm without fear that it never was approached so closely. Since the first great defiance thrown down by the establishment of Christianity to the triumph of evil in the world, never perhaps has the empire of the devil been so much shaken and contested.

Must we then conclude that the middle ages are the ideal period of Christian society? Ought we to see there the normal condition of the world? God forbid! In the first place, there never has been, and never will be, a normal state or irreproachable epoch in this earth. And, besides, if that ideal could be realized here below, it is not in the middle ages that it has been attained. These ages have been called the ages of faith; and they have been justly so called, for faith was more sovereign then than in any other epoch of history. But there we must stop. This is much, but it is enough for the truth. We cannot venture to maintain that virtue and happiness have been throughout these ages on a level with faith. A thousand incontrovertible witnesses would rise up to protest against such a rash assertion, to recall the general insecurity, the too frequent triumphs of violence, iniquity, cruelty, deceit, sometimes even of refined depravity; to demonstrate that the human and even diaboli-

cal element reasserted only too strongly their ascendency in the world. By the side of the opened heavens, hell always appeared; and beside those prodigies of sanctity which are so rare elsewhere, were to be found ruffians scarcely inferior to those Roman emperors whom Bossuet calls "monsters of the human race."

The Church, which is always influenced, up to a certain point, by contemporary civilization, endured many abuses and scandals, the very idea of which would to-day horrify both her children and her enemies. They proceeded sometimes from that corruption which is inseparable from the exercise of great power and the possession of great wealth; sometimes, and most frequently, from the invasions of the lay spirit and temporal power. Yes, cupidity, violence, and debauchery revolted often, and with success, against the yoke of the Gospel, even among its own ministers; they infected even the organs of the law promulgated to repress them. We can and ought to confess it without fear, because the evil was almost always overcome by the good; because all these excesses were redeemed by marvels of self-denial, penitence, and charity; because beside every fall is found an expiation; for every misery an asylum; to every wickedness some resistance. Sometimes in cells of monasteries, sometimes in caves of the rocks; here, under the tiara or the mitre; there, under the helmet and coat of arms, thousands of souls fought with glory and perseverance the battles of the Lord, fortifying the feeble by their example, reviving the enthusiasm even of those who neither wished nor knew how to imitate them, and displaying over the vices and disorders of the crowd the splendid light of their prodigious austerity, their profuse charity, their unwearied love of God. But all this dazzling light of virtue and sanctity ought not to blind us to what lay beneath. There were more saints, more monks, and, above all, more believers, than in our days; but I do not hesitate to say that there were fewer priests, I mean good priests. Yes; the secular clergy of the middle ages were less pure, less exemplary than ours; the episcopate was less respectable, and the spiritual authority of the Holy See much less severeign than now. This assertion will, perhaps, astonish some in their ignorant admiration; but it is not the less easy to prove it. The pontifical power has, at the present time, subjects less numerous, but infinitely more docile. What it has lost in extent, it has more than gained in intensity.

And besides this, the dominion of the Church, usurped by some, disputed by others, and balanced by a crowd of rival or vassal authorities, was never all-powerful nor uncontested. She saw her laws perpetually violated, her discipline altered, her rights scorned, not only in temporal matters but in spiritual; not as now, by declared enemies, but by the so-called faithful, who, when their pride or their interest required it, knew how to brave her thunders with as much coolness as the *esprits forts* of our own time. The true grandeur and strength of the Church of the middle ages lay, not in her wealth or power, not in being loved, served, and protected by princes, but in her freedom. She was free by right of the general liberty, such as was comprehended and practised in those days, which belonged to all corporations and proprietors; she enjoyed the largest amount of freedom known, because she was at the same time the greatest corporation and the largest landowner in Europe. This freedom, which has always been the first guarantee of her majesty, of her fruitfulness, of her duration, the first condition of her life, she possessed more completely then, than at any previous period; and never (save in those few States where modern liberty has been able to shake off all superannuated fetters) has she possessed it to the same degree since. And as the destinies and rights of the Church and each Christian soul are identical, never was the soul more free, free to do good, to give itself to God, to sacrifice itself to its neighbor. From thence come these marvels of devotion, of charity, and of sanctity, which charm and dazzle us.

But it would be the most complete and inexcusable error to imagine that this liberty was universally recognized and uncontested. On the contrary, it lived and triumphed only in the midst of storms. It was necessary to struggle for it unceasingly, to wrest it from the grasp of lay pretensions and rivalries, from the dominion of temporal interests. The Church was, besides, happily and usefully "restrained by civil liberty, which kept her from degenerating into a dominant theocracy."[11] We must then acknowledge that the Church had never, and in no place, an absolute and permanent supremacy — that she has never, and nowhere, seen her adversaries annihilated or chained at her feet. This was precisely the pledge of her long and glorious influence, her lasting ascendency, her blessed action upon souls and laws.

[11] LACORDAIRE, Comparison of the Flaviens and Capétiens, in the *Correspondant* of the 25th June, 1859.

She required to be always in resistance, always renewing herself by effort. During the entire course of the true middle ages the Church never ceased her struggle for a single day; it was granted her oftener to vanquish than to fall back; she never underwent a complete defeat; but never either could she lie down to sleep in the pride of triumph, or in the enervating peace of dictatorship.

Never, then, was anything more false and puerile than the strange pretence maintained by certain tardy supporters of the Catholic *renaissance*, of presenting the middle ages to us as a period in which the Church was always victorious and protected; as a promised land flowing with milk and honey, governed by kings and nobles piously kneeling before the priests, and by a devout, silent, and docile crowd, tranquilly stretched out under the crook of their pastors, to sleep in the shade, under the double authority of the inviolably respected throne and altar. Far from that, there never were greater passions, more disorders, wars, and revolts; but at the same time there were never greater virtues, more generous efforts for the service of goodness. All was war, dangers, and tempests, in the Church as in the State; but all was likewise strong, robust, and vivacious: everything bore the impression of life and strife. On one side faith, a faith sincere, *naïve*, simple, and vigorous, without hypocrisy as without insolence, neither servile nor narrow-minded, exhibiting every day the imposing spectacle of strength in humility; on the other, institutions militant and manful, which, amid a thousand defects, had the admirable virtue of creating men, not valets or pious eunuchs, and which one and all ordained these men to action, to sacrifice, and continual exertions. Strong natures everywhere vigorously nourished, and in no direction stifled, quenched, or disdained, found their place there with ease and simplicity. Feeble natures, with the fibre relaxed, found there the most fitting regimen to give them vigor and tone. Worthy people, relying upon a master who undertook to defend all by silencing or enchaining their adversaries, were not to be seen there. We cannot look upon these Christians as on good little lambs, bleating devoutly among wolves, or taking courage between the knees of the shepherd. They appear, on the contrary, like athletes, like soldiers engaged every day in fighting for the most sacred possessions: in a word, like men armed with the most robust personality and individual force, unfettered as undecaying.

If, then, the middle ages deserve to be admired, it is precisely for reasons which would bring upon them the condemnation of their recent panegyrists, if they understood better what their enthusiasm, by mere misconstruction, extols.

I admit, on the other hand, that these times may well appear frightful to eyes which appreciate order and discipline above everything else, provided they give their consent to my proposition that its virtues and courage were heroic. I admit that its violence was almost continual, its superstition sometimes ridiculous, its ignorance too widely spread, and its wickedness too often unpunished; provided you grant to me, in return, that the consciousness of human dignity has never been more vividly impressed in the depths of men's hearts, and that the first of all forces, and the only one really to be respected, the strength of the soul, has never reigned with less disputed supremacy.

As for those among its detractors, who accuse the Catholic past of the Western races of being incompatible with freedom, we can oppose to them the unanimous testimony, not only of all historical monuments, but of all those democratic writers of our own day, who have profoundly studied this past; above all, of M. Augustin Thierry, who has shown so well how many barriers and guarantees had to be overthrown by royalty before it would establish its universal sway. This ancient world was bristling with liberty. The spirit of resistance, the sentiment of individual right, penetrated it entirely; and it is this which always and everywhere constitutes the essence of freedom. That freedom has established everywhere a system of counterpoise and restraint, which rendered all prolonged despotism absolutely impossible. But its special guarantees were two principles which modern society has renounced — the principles of *hérédité* and association. Besides, they appear to us under the form of privileges, which is enough to prevent many from understanding or admiring them.

Certainly the misfortunes, disappointments, and stains of modern liberty, should not weaken the faithful love which she inspires in generous souls. No fault, no grievance ought to detach those whom she has once warmed with her love. But, at the same time, these faults and grievances compel us to be modest and indulgent in regard to the restrained or imperfect forms in which she has been clothed among our fathers. Liberty had no existence then in the condition of a theory or abstract principle applied to the general mass of

humanity, to all nations, even those who neither desire nor know her. But freedom was a fact and a right to many men, to a larger number than possess her now; and for all who appreciated and wished for her, was much more easy both to acquire and to preserve.

To whom is freedom especially necessary? To individuals and to minorities. They found her, during these ages, under limits, which the mutual control of natural or traditional forces imposed upon all authority and sovereignty whatsoever. They found her specially in the happy multiplicity of those small states, those independent monarchies, those provincial or municipal republics, which have always been bulwarks of the dignity of man, and the theatre of his most salutary exertions; where the courageous and capable citizen finds the greatest scope for his legitimate ambition, and where he is less swallowed up and lost in the general mass than in great states.

Further, our proud ancestors ignored the very idea of that unlimited power of the State which is now so ardently appealed to, or easily accepted everywhere. What have been called "the necessary evils of unlimited monarchy,"[12] were nowhere recognized among them. Since then the unity and absolute independence of sovereign power have replaced in the world the sentiment and guarantees of personal liberty. The better to attain and secure equality, we have applied ourselves to the work of suppressing all little states and local existence, of breaking every link which unites us to ancient freedom. All connection has been cast aside with the traditions of dignity and right which she has produced. A dead level has been regarded as a mark of progress, and identity of yoke as a guarantee. It has been said, in so many words, that the triumph of the despotism of one is better than the maintenance of the liberty of many. People will put up with a master, in order to have no chiefs; and have voted the death of right, in fear of aiding the resurrection of privilege. They have succeeded; an equality like that of China has been attained; and we know too well what price must be paid for that acquisition, and how much honor and liberty it leaves behind to the nations which have yielded to its sway. *Receperunt mercedem suam, vani vanam.*

God forbid, despite the appearances and melancholy teachings of this actual time — God forbid that we should assert

[12] Augustin Thierry, *Introduction aux Monuments de l'Histoire du Tiers-Etat*, p. 244, 4to.

equality to be incompatible with liberty; but up to the present time, the art of making them live and last together has not been discovered in any of the great countries of the European continent. We should therefore exercise forbearance, at least, towards an age in which, without caring for an equality which no one claimed or dreamt of, men possessed the sentiment and use of freedom, which they knew how to reconcile more or less with authority, as variety was reconciled with unity, and a profound respect for individual right with the force and fruitfulness of the spirit of association.

It was the energetic and manly character of their institutions and men, which secured the reign of liberty in the middle ages. We have already pointed this out, but we cannot revert to it too often. Everything there breathes freedom, health, and life — all is full of vigor, force, and youth. 'Tis like the first burst of nature whose spontaneous vigor had not yet been robbed of any portion of its grace and charm. We see limpid and healthful currents everywhere springing forth and extending themselves. They encounter a thousand obstacles and embarrassments upon their way: but almost always they surmount and overthrow these, to carry afar the fertilizing virtue of their waters.

A generous leaven ferments in the bosom of that apparent confusion. Virtue and truth take the lead, by sustained efforts, and the prolonged sacrifices of a multitude of admirable souls. We discover unceasingly, and contemplate with joy, these unwearied souls devoted to a constant struggle against evil, and all oppressions and tyrannies, laboriously initiated into the triumphs of moral force, and heroically faithful to that faith in God's justice which it is so necessary but so difficult to maintain while waiting here below for the rare and uncertain manifestations of that justice in history.

In our days, it is true, we have destroyed all the institutions and superior powers whose duration and grandeur weighed often with too heavy a burden upon the common mass of men. But what inestimable resources for the strength and happiness of the people have we not condemned to annihilation with them! How often have we acted like those insane destroyers, who, under pretext of exterminating the birds of prey, have unpeopled the forest of its guests, of its songs, of its life, and overthrown the harmony of nature? You think you have got rid of the eagles? Be it so! But who shall free you now from the reptiles and venomous insects?

Once more, let me assert that I would not deny the violences, abuses, and crimes of that misunderstood past. In the course of my narrative these will be very apparent. I deny none of the advantages, the progress, and real benefits which have resulted from the change of manners and ideas in modern society. Such indisputable and most fortunate advantages do exist, in the comfort of the inferior classes, the improvement of manners, the administration of justice, the general security, the abolition of many atrocious penalties against spiritual and temporal errors, the happy impotency of fanaticism and religious persecution, the shorter and less cruel wars, and the universal respect for the rights of humanity. I only question whether there may not have been a proportional loss in energy of character, in love of liberty, and in the instinct of honor. I do not think that I ignore either the rights or necessities of my time. I accept without reserve and regret the social condition which is the product of the French Revolution, and which, under the name of democracy, reigns and will reign more and more in the modern world. I hail with joy that inestimable advantage of equality before the law, which is a thousand times more precious to the vanquished than to the victors, provided hypocrisy does not confiscate it to the profit of the strongest. When political freedom, under the sole form which it can bear in our country, reigned among us, and seemed likely to spread through all Europe, I loyally served and practised it, and, thanks to Heaven! never feared its reign for the truth. If that freedom should ever reappear, far from feeling alarm, I should bless its return.

The powers of the day teach us that it is incompatible with democracy, which is the inevitable law of the New World, and that this can only live and prosper along with equality and authority. Let us hope that they deceive themselves. And even if they are right, let us entreat democracy not to benumb and enervate democratic nations, not to render them incapable of self-government, self-defence, and self-respect. Let us hope, that, after having bowed down every head, she may know better than to enslave every heart.

But while I hear the accents of that frightful adulation of fallen humanity, which is the distinctive characteristic of too many modern writers — whilst I see them lying prostrate before that idol which personifies their own vanity as well as that of their readers, and exhausting all the resources of a

frivolous enthusiasm to intoxicate contemporary generations with impure incense — I remain sadly impressed by the spectacle of the debasement, feebleness, and growing impotence of each individual man in modern society. Does not this stupid and servile apotheosis of the wisdom and power of the masses menace us with the extinction at once of every personal initiative and all strong originality, and with the annihilation, at the same time, of all the proud susceptibilities of the soul, and the genius of public life? Shall we not be condemned to see every distinction, hierarchy, nobility, and independence, swallowed up in that invading and corrupt servitude which is exercised in the name of the omnipotence of numbers, *and which debases men so far as to make itself beloved by them?*[13] Do we not risk the disappearance, beyond return, of individual dignity and liberty, under the absolute sovereignty of the State, of that despot who never dies, and who already extends everywhere his irresistible and pitiless level over prostrate human dust? And even beyond the sphere of politics, who can throw an attentive and affectionate glance upon the actual world without being struck by its intellectual and moral impoverishment, even amidst the imposing grandeur of its material conquests and comforts? Who does not recoil before that flat monotony, that vast *ennui*, which threatens to become the distinctive characteristic of future civilization? Who does not feel that the moral jurisdiction of souls lowers itself every day under the empire of material interests? Who does not tremble at that universal and progressive empire of mediocrity in theory as in practice, in men as in things? Who does not dimly foresee an era of general baseness and weakness, so much the more incurable that these sad infirmities are the natural and logical product of principles and institutions in which blind philosophers have pretended to concentrate the laws of progress, where quality is always stifled by quantity, and right sacrificed to force?

Weakness and baseness! these are precisely the things which were most completely unknown to the middle ages. They had their vices and crimes, numerous and atrocious; but in them strong and proud hearts never failed. In public life as in private, in the world as in the cloister, strong and magnanimous souls everywhere break forth — illustrious character and great individuals abounded.

[13] Vauvenargues.

And therein lies the true, the undeniable superiority of the middle ages. It was an epoch fertile in men —

"Magna parens virûm."

What and where has been always the great obstacle to the triumph of virtue and truth upon earth? Surely not in the laws, the dogmas, and sacrifices, which impose or imply the possession of truth. We find it rather in those men whose duty it is to proclaim truth, to represent virtue, and to defend justice, and who, too often unequal to their task and unfaithful to their mission, turn back towards error or evil the generations whose guides and responsible teachers they were. Faith and laws have never been wanting to man: it is man himself who betrays his doctrine, his belief, and his duties. Give the world for its masters and models, men, pure, devout, energetic, humble in faith and obedient to duty, but intrepid and incapable of softness and baseness — real men; and the world will be always, if not saved by them, at least attentive to their voice, inspired by their lessons, and often led on or kept in order by their example. They will almost always triumph over evil; they will invariably make themselves respected by all and followed by many.

The middle ages produced a multitude of men of this temper; they produced many of a different kind; profligates and wretches were numerous then as everywhere, and in all times; but their number was balanced and even surpassed by that of saints and good men, men of heart and honor. They appear, one by one, to our astonished eyes, like the summits of the mountains after the Deluge, and they rise higher day by day in proportion as the waves of falsehood and ignorance abate and retire. Let us study these men; let us sound their hearts and reins; let us dissect their deeds and their writings — they have nothing to fear from that analysis, even when made by the most hostile hands. We shall there see whether, as incorrigible ignorance maintains, Catholicism weakens man, whether faith and humility lessen intelligence and courage, and whether there has ever been more energy or grandeur than in those souls which a vulgar prejudice represents to us as the creatures of fanaticism and superstition.

"It appears," said one of the greatest and most honest writers of our age, "in reading the histories of the aristocratic ages, that, to become master of his own fate and to rule his fellows, a man has only to overcome himself. But in

running over the histories of our own times, one would say that man can do nothing, neither for himself nor those around him." [14]

From whence comes this miserable decline? Since man has lost the rein which directed and controlled him, since imprudent and impious hands have proscribed that discipline of Catholicism which human liberty has such imperative need of, the souls of men have subsided upon themselves; in place of Christian liberty they have encountered servitude, and in the midst of revolt have permitted themselves to fall into impotence.

M. de Tocqueville has said truly, To subdue self is the secret of strength. First to subdue and then to devote one's self, was the foundation of the monastic institution; but it was also in civil and public life the foundation of the noble characters as well as the solid institutions and robust liberties of our Catholic ancestors.

When we have long contemplated and studied them thoroughly, we fall back with sad astonishment upon the tame and feeble temperaments, the failing hearts, the weakened character and enervated will of which modern society is formed, and which would make us despair of the future, had not God made hope a virtue and a duty.

For it is not evil, nor its undeniable progress, more or less, which should disquiet us. We tremble rather before the weakness of virtue. I do not know that vice has not been more flagrant, intense, and universal in other times than the present; but I do know, unless history is a vast falsehood from beginning to end that virtue has never been so enervated and so timid. I speak especially of public life. I admit and admire the treasures of faith and charity which the actual world encloses in its bosom. But are the virtues of private life enough for nations emancipated by the blood of Christ? and besides, is it not always, sooner or later, infected and injured by social degeneration? At the present time, and in public life and the social sphere, virtue seems only to exist in men's consciences long enough to be sacrificed at the first appearance of danger, or touch of fatigue. If a struggle is inevitable, we may endure it for the space of a morning, but only on condition either of being crowned with victory before nightfall, or capitulating next day.

Success only is esteemed, the vile success of an hour, of a

[14] Tocqueville, *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, iii. 173.

moment. This inspires the most worthy souls with involuntary respect. Resistance, long and thorough, appears to them insane and impossible. We no longer know either the secrets of courage, the holy joys of sacrifice, or the magic of danger nobly encountered in a noble cause. Thus the reign of the infidel is less assured than that of the coward. Alas! it is our own weakness which is our worst enemy; it is this which makes the good man not only the involuntary slave, but the docile servant, instrument, and accomplice of the wicked. Of all the arts, that one which has been brought to the greatest perfection among us, is the art of laying down our arms and stooping our neck under the yoke. We live in the age of concessions, of failures, of base complaisance for everything that has the appearance of strength. Fear is our queen. We long, like Esther before Ahasuerus, to kiss the end of her sceptre.

This being so, we might at least, in the midst of our modern enjoyments and security, render justice to the great men of the ages of faith. In the tranquil enjoyment of those good things still guaranteed by the Catholic faith, of the domestic virtues, conjugal fidelity, and the security of the fireside, all which we owe to the stubborn courage of the generations which have preceded us, we might learn to bless and honor these chosen soldiers, who died on the ramparts which protect us still, who fought to secure to us those truths and virtues which constitute the common patrimony of Christian nations.

As for us, we ask for these men and their times not favor, but justice. Our ambition is to restore their aureole to those old and forgotten saints who were once the heroes of our annals, the divine ancestors of all Christian nations, the patriarchs of all faithful races, the immortal models of spiritual life, the witnesses and the martyrs of truth. Our duty is to recognize in their life the ideal of Christian humanity, but an ideal which all men in all times can approach, and which has never ceased to be realized, in different degrees, in the bosom of Catholic unity.

Through the clouds which shroud their memory, they offer to us the grandest and most encouraging of spectacles — that of an army victorious in the service of a good cause. The time in which they lived and fought had, like all other times, its disorders, excesses, abuses, and ruins. But the cause was not the less good, nor the army less heroic.

Yes, it may well be asserted, the middle ages are, and

shall remain, the heroic age of Christendom. But be not afraid; we cannot return to it. You, its blind panegyrists, will attempt it in vain; and you, its detractors equally blind, are foolishly alarmed by a chimerical danger. Man can neither be kept in his cradle nor sent back there. Youth does not return. We can neither resuscitate its charm nor its storms. We are the sons of the middle ages, we cannot continue them. Emancipated from the past, we are responsible only for the present and the future. But, thank God! we need not blush for our cradle.

The question is not, then, in any respect, to reconstruct that which has disappeared forever, or to save that which God has permitted to perish; the question is solely to claim the rights of justice and truth, and to reassert that good fame of Catholic men and times which is our inalienable inheritance. Such ought to be the sole aim of this renewal of Catholic history, which some men follow through a thousand obstacles and disappointments, oftener excited than arrested by the renewed attacks of the enemy, and still more frequently troubled and afflicted in the sincerity of their efforts by the follies and miseries which they incur the risk of appearing responsible for. But they know that often, after long darkness, the truth finds secret issues, unforeseen outlets, marvellous blossomings, which no human power can arrest. They trust in the tardy but inevitable justice of posterity.

If the end of historical studies is, as Montaigne says, "to converse with the great minds of the best ages,"[15] this could be nowhere better attained than in surveying this epoch which has been so long sacrificed. The most eloquent priest of our times has not caluminated history, in saying of her that she was "the rich treasury of man's dishonor."[16] She demonstrates most frequently only the triumphs of injustice, and, what is worse, the base connivance of posterity with these triumphs, and its perverse adulation of successful crime. But notwithstanding, a noble and consolatory mission remains to the historian; to protest against the perverse instincts of the crowd; to raise just but lost causes to the appreciation of the heart; to vindicate legitimate resistance, modest and tried virtue, perseverance unfruitful, but steadfast in well-doing; to throw light upon forgotten corners, where languishes the betrayed memory of good men overcome; to batter down, or at least to breach usurped glories, and wicked

[15] Montaigne, *Essais*, i. 25.
[16] Le P. Lacordaire, *Panégyrique du B. Fourier.*

or corrupt popularity; but, above all, to bring to light and honor man himself, his individual soul, his efforts, his strength, his virtue, and his worth, and to protest thus against the odious oppression of those pretended general laws, which serve as apologies for so much crime and cowardice. Is it possible to imagine a nobler or purer task for any man who is not bound to the worship of strength and success? And where could he fulfil it better than in the inexhaustible mine and vast unexplored regions of the Catholic ages?

And moreover, beyond all systematic and polemical research, the study of history, especially in those depths which are at once so obscure and so closely connected with our origin, exercises upon every delicate mind an influence deeply attractive, and full of melancholy sweetness. It attracts, enlightens, and awakes, like the echo of the songs of our youth. If it happens to an old man to listen, in the decline of his years, to a melody which has charmed his childhood, it transports him, not without profit to his soul, into the midst of the dreams and hopes of former years. It restores to him neither his strength nor his youthful vigor, but it makes him breathe again the breath of his spring-time. He lives anew; he is reanimated and retempered in his primitive ardor; and if happily inspired, he recalls all that he has learned, suffered, and accomplished; he perceives his own modest and laborious place in the long succession of his race; he binds together the chain of time; he understands his life, and he is resigned. Before that past, which opens to him the perspective of the future, he bows his head with love and respect, without at any time confounding what was only its young and fragile beauty with its essential virtue and undying soul.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE FORTUNE OF THIS BOOK.

Vagliami 'l lungo studio e il grand' amore.

But now is the time when the enjoyments which this long labor has brought me draw near their end. "When a book appears," says a woman of genius, "what happy moments has it not given to one who writes according to his heart, and as

an act of worship! What sweet tears have fallen in his solitude upon the marvels it narrates!"[1] She was right; and without aspiring to the rank which she has attained — without venturing, like her, into the domain of imagination — it is possible to find inexhaustible attractions in a graver and less brilliant sphere. Those long and indefatigable researches through the labors of others, in search of a date, of a fact, of a name, of a striking or speaking detail; those discoveries which every author flatters himself that he has been first to make or restore to light; that truth which he perceives, which he seizes, which escapes him, which returns, which at last he lays hold of, and sets forth luminous and victorious forever; those interviews, intimate and prolonged, with so many great and holy souls who come out of the shadows of the past to reveal themselves by their acts or their writings; all the pure and profound enjoyments of a conscientious historian — behold them finished!

"Things won are done: joy's soul lies in the doing."

They must give place to the trials, to the disappointments, to the dangers of publicity — to the numerous chances of malevolence, indifference, and forgetfulness. Now rises a melancholy anticipation of the dangers which we are about to brave, of the troubles which we have spontaneously drawn upon ourselves. Now appears in all its bitterness the difficult and thankless task of the writer who loves his own soul and that of his neighbor: now, but too late, we discover all the good reasons we had to be discouraged, to renounce the task and hold our peace.

Among so many dangers there is one which the most indulgent critic cannot fail to point out, and which I am conscious not to have avoided — that of monotony. Always the same incidents and the same motives! always penitence, retirement, the struggle of evil against good, of the spirit against the flesh, of solitude against the world — always foundations, donations, vocations — always self-devotion, sacrifice, generosity, courage, patience! The result of this wearies the pen of the writer, and, still more, the attention of the reader. Let us, however, remark, that the virtues so frequently evoked in the following narratives are still sufficiently rare in the world, and appear but too seldom before the ordinary tribunal of history. Here we shall see them

[1] Madame de Staël, *De l'Allemagne.*

almost on every page. They are, it is true, accompanied by the inevitable train of human inconsistency, feebleness, and wretchedness; but these we encounter, perhaps, less here than in any other narrative. I venture even to affirm that we shall see less here than elsewhere of those triumphs of violence and deceit, of injustice and falsehood — thanks to which, the annals of humanity are so repulsive, and the lessons of history so immoral. I may perhaps be led astray by a certain degree of self-estimation; but I am fain to hope that the reader who is sufficiently patient to follow me to the end, will come forth from this study with a soul at once tranquillized by the sweet influences of the purest virtue, and stimulated both by the love of all that renews and exalts human nature, and by aversion for everything which taints and debases it.

However, I must repeat again, I have never extenuated the evil nor magnified the good which I might find upon my road: I have sought to represent the monastic orders, and the society in which they occupied so important a place, by reproducing faithfully the features and the colors furnished by contemporary authors.

And I may be permitted to say that it is impossible to have been more rigidly scrupulous in all that concerns the correctness of these researches. Every word which I have written has been drawn from original and contemporary sources, and if I have quoted facts or expressions from second-hand authors, it has never been without attentively verifying the original or completing the text. A single date, quotation, or note, apparently insignificant, has often cost me hours and sometimes days of labor. I have never contented myself with being approximatively right, nor resigned myself to doubt until every chance of arriving at certainty was exhausted. It is a thankless and painful task, but one which ends by having a certain attraction, and becoming a habit, of which it is impossible to divest one's self. "Truth," says a celebrated historian of our day — one who can boast with truth that *his age has read him* — "Truth is the object, the duty, and even the happiness of a true historian: when we know how noble she is, and even how convenient — for she alone explains everything — when we know her, we seek her, we desire her, we love her, we set forth her image only, or at least something which we take for her."[2]

[2] M. THIERS, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, vol. xvi. p. 418.

I have thought it a duty, at the risk of enlarging these volumes, and even of making them less accessible to the general reader, to add as notes the original text of the most important passages of the authors quoted, and especially of the correspondences embodied in my text. I have acted thus, certainly not out of ostentation, or to give myself credit for an easy erudition, but by a natural taste for exactitude and for the uttermost sincerity. The voluminous works from which I have personally extracted all these passages, and which have hitherto been difficult of access, have recently become much less rare and costly.[3] I desired at the same time to give examples of the Latin of the middle ages — that idiom, retempered and transfigured, so to speak, by Christianity, which retains, beside the inimitable beauty of the classic models, a grace of its own. But above all, I lacked courage to reduce the magnificent language of our Catholic ancestors to the mean proportions of my own feebleness. I have almost always found my translation, however literal it was, so imperfect and unfaithful, that I give it only as a sort of indication, to put my readers upon the road, of the beauty and truth of the originals. I love to believe that those among them who appreciate historical sincerity will remember with kindness, in the future, this increase of labor and sacrifice of self-love.

The task of the historian, thus understood, resembles that of the engraver, who lavishes his labor, his time, and his eyesight, and sometimes consecrates ten or twenty years of his life, to reproduce with a religious scrupulousness the smallest details of the canvas of the great painter whom his admiration has chosen. His pious labor is devoted to spread far and wide faithful copies of a model which he despairs to equal, and thus to convert the treasure, known only to a few, into the patrimony of the many. His task is often interrupted, but perpetually returned to, until his persevering graver has accomplished the cherished work. Thus have I labored, a modest and diligent workman, for a glory which is not mine. I have attempted to raise a monument, not certainly to my own renown, but to that of virtue, truth, and

[3] Thanks to the *Patrologie* published by M. l'Abbé Migne, who has reproduced, in an easy and economical form, not only the greater part of the ancient collections, but a multitude of documents and authors almost entirely out of reach. Unhappily for me, most of my researches were made before the publications of M. Migne; hence the many references to editions which are now, so to speak, out of circulation.

sanctity, of which I am only a distant and unworthy admirer. I have hoped, not to create a great work of my own, but simply to reproduce and multiply the image of the great deeds of our fathers, and to promote the admiration and study of their honor.

Public events, in which duty and honor had assigned me a part, have long and often interrupted this work. When I have taken it up again, and recalled the time in which it was begun, I am obliged to acknowledge that many changes have taken place around, which still more diminish the chances of success, and dissipate all the vanity of authorship.

This work, which, published sooner, might perhaps, like the *Histoire de Sainte Elisabeth*, twenty-five years ago, have opened a new path across the vast field of Catholic history, can only prètend now to take its place among a series of contemporary studies. The subject, then completely ignored or forgotten, has been since approached by many. Although no extensive view of the entire field of monastic history has been attempted, the ground has been broken by monographs sufficiently numerous and detailed, to have already in some degree fatigued the public attention, and to deter the reader from that which he can already look upon as a beaten road, and a landscape already too well known. For the same reason, many results attained by laborious researches are no longer held to be discoveries, and scarcely arrest the gaze of the curious.

Besides — and this is still sadder and more important — the spirit of many amongst Catholics has changed. The religious public has fallen a prey to the domination of a school whose very existence would have seemed a dream when this work was begun, but whose empire is sufficiently established to enable them now to pronounce a kind of ostracism against all who will not bow beneath their yoke in the religious sphere.

It is unnecessary to say that a book which proclaims the divinity of the Gospel, and the infallible authority of the Church, is not likely to be received as work of any worth by the popular arbiters of taste and distributors of contemporary fame. Discarded amongst those whom they call the slaves of orthodoxy, the author, in the eyes of the most indulgent of these authorities, can only be entitled to silent pity.

But, moreover, it must be known and acknowledged that a book which recognizes the rights of reason, and searches with ardor through the past for the effaced vestiges of liberty and

honor, to make them cherished and regretted by modern generations, must renounce all hope of success with too great a number of those who call themselves orthodox.

Twenty years ago all studies favorable to the re-establishment of Catholic truth, especially in history, were received with indulgent sympathy by the faithful and the clergy. In their ranks, in their hearts, we found an assured asylum against the disdains and derisions of our natural adversaries, and against the absence of that great public favor, which for a long time has belonged exclusively to productions hostile or indifferent to religion. Now it is no longer thus; the merits of the defenders of the Catholic cause are too often judged according to those oracles who inflict wilfully, on all who reject their authority, the reproach of liberalism, rationalism, and, above all, of naturalism.

I have achieved a right to this threefold reproach. I should be surprised, and even mortified, not to be thought worthy of it, for I adore liberty, which alone, in my judgment, secures to truth triumphs worthy of her. I hold reason to be the grateful ally of faith, not her enslaved and humiliated victim. And, lastly, although animated by a lively and simple faith in the supernatural, I have recourse to it only when the Church ordains, or when all natural explanation fails to interpret undeniable facts. This will be enough to call down upon me the anathema of our modern inquisitors, whose thunders we must know how to brave, unless, as said Mabillon in an encounter with certain monastic denunciators of his time, "unless we choose to renounce sincerity, good faith, and honor."[4]

Thus, then, disdained by one party as bearing the stamp of superstition and credulity, this book will still be marked

[4] He says further: — "I know that it is the fate of all who give anything to the public, and especially of those who treat of history, to expose themselves to the censure of men, and to draw upon themselves the anger of many. . . . Indeed, whatever part we take, or however carefully we may regulate our design, it is impossible to content all the world. If we receive everything without discussion, we are ridiculed by judicious persons; and if we examine everything with exactness and discernment, we are called rash and presumptuous by others; *Si quid simpliciter edumus, insani; si quid exacte, vocamur præsumptuosi.* Of these two methods I have chosen the second, as being most conformed to that love of truth which a Christian, a monk, and a priest, ought to possess, as well as most advantageous to the honor of the order; and, in short, as being absolutely necessary in an enlightened age like ours, which permits us neither to write fables, nor to advance anything of which there is not sufficient proof." — *Réponse au Père Bastide;* quoted by M. Dantier in his *Rapports sur la Correspondance Inédite des Bénédictins de St. Maur.* 1857.

out by the other as "written in a spirit of complacency towards the present times." For this is the language used against such as me.[5] It will stand ignored, and still more certainly unknown, between two kinds of enmities. I am grieved at the thought, but not afraid. I consent willingly to be treated as a suspected person on the one hand, and as a fanatic on the other. It is the fate of him who belongs to no party, and no party has a claim upon me. I owe nothing to any man. I no longer aspire to anything, unless to the ineffable joy of confessing the good cause, and braving the wretched triumphs of falsehood and baseness. The yoke of truth I bear with pride, and have never known any other.

But I would not only confess, I would fain also serve this truth; and it is in this respect that I fear to have betrayed it.

In terminating this first foundation of an edifice which has consumed many years of assiduous labor, I feel myself confounded and humiliated by the worthlessness of my work compared to the labor which it has cost me, and, above all, to the ideal which I had formed. The consciousness of a double weakness seizes and overpowers me. I feel myself beneath my task, both in soul and talent. Of these two inferiorities, the first is doubtless the most poignant and painful. Others much less unworthy than myself have confessed it with trembling, in proportion as they entered into the annals of the monks and saints. The illustrious Mabillon, in completing one of his incomparable volumes, said, in terms which I must quote for my own confusion, "May it please God not to impute it to me as a crime that I have passed so many years studying the acts of the saints, and yet resemble them so little!"[6] The great apostle had already expressed that humble distrust of himself in the memorable text: "Lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."[7] And the psalmist seems to address to us specially that formidable warning: "Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?"[8] "Whoso-

[5] This alludes to the twenty-four articles of theological criticism published in the *Univers* by Dom Gueranger, Abbot of Solesmes, against Prince Albert de Broglie's book, *The Church and the Empire in the Fourth Century*. — TRANSLATOR.

[6] "Utinam et mihi non in culpam vertat, quod per tot annos in actis sanctorum occupatus, tam longe absim ab eorum exemplis." — *Præf. in V. sæc. Bened.*, n. 138.

[7] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

[8] Psalm l. 16.

ever," says St. John Chrysostom, "admires with love the merits of the saints, and exalts the glory of the just, ought to imitate their uprightness and sanctity. . . . We ought to imitate them if we praise them, or cease to praise them if we scorn to imitate."[9]

To quote these formidable words, which bear witness against me, is enough, or more than enough, to show that a deep sense of my insufficiency is not wanting. Happily there are authorities whose indulgence is more encouraging. "It is," says St. Jerome, "a kind of candid and ingenuous confession to praise in others that which is awanting in one's self."[10] And do I need to protest besides that I have never pretended to write a work of edification, nor believed myself authorized to give to others lessons of penitence or sacrifice, of which I had but too much need for myself? So arrogant a thought has never glanced upon my soul: a just conviction of my own inferiority was enough to recall to me that such was neither my right nor my mission.

A simple child of the Church, I do not pretend to be either her organ or her minister; and much more justly than Mabillon I ought to reproach myself in relating these marvels of Christian virtue, that I know so well how to admire them, and so little how to imitate.

But on a lower level than these heights, and without any other title than that of a sinner who has not denied his faith, without any other pretension than that of rendering a distant and humble homage to truth, may not we be permitted, even with an infirm hand, and colors tarnished by the breath of the world, to trace the image of that which we venerate and love? The painter who attempts to reproduce the ideal of beauty does not pretend to resemble his model; and no one reproaches him with that impotence. The Church accepts graciously, and even permits to be offered in her name to the faithful, images often coarse and rustic, without demanding too much of the artist, and on the sole condition that his design does not injure the majesty of the symbol. She allows him to share thus in the blessing which descends upon all acts of goodwill. She also allows the obscure Christian, who walks in the splendid processions of her worship, lost among the crowd, and is neither pontiff nor priest, nor even a mod-

[9] St. John Chrysost., *Serm. de Martyribus, quod aut imitandi sunt, aut non laudandi.*

[10] "Ingenua et verecunda confessio est quo ipse careas id in aliis prædicare." — *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 108, edition Collombet.

est acolyte charged with the censer or candlestick, to join his sincere voice to the concerts of the sacred ministers, and to sing without pride, but without fear, the praises of the Most High.

Should I speak, finally, of my literary insufficiency to this colossal task which I have had the temerity to undertake? No one can be more convinced of it than I am. After the history of the Church herself, there is no vaster or more noble subject than the history of the monastic orders. I feel a melancholy certainty that I have not done it justice. Let others arise, then, to replace and efface me; let their better-inspired labors restore to chaos this incomplete essay.

I will not venture to say with the prophet: "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" [11] Alas! I am too sensible that I have not received that sublime gift of genius, that pen that graves, not on the rock, but even on the hardest hearts, the ineffaceable stamp of truth. My only merit will be that of compiling, of translating, and of transcribing events which so many saints and heroes have inspired and accomplished.

There is, however, a thought which ought to warm the courage and restore the strength of the humblest soldier of the faith: it is the recollection of the immense evil done to humanity, not only by the genius of the great enemies of God, but by that cloud of obscure scribes, of vulgar and servile copyists, who have distilled in detail the venom of their masters, and have diffused it through all the lesser veins of the social body. In sight of the daily-increasing mischief they make, one can understand how it might be a legitimate ambition and honorable duty to become the scribe of justice and the copyist of truth.

Even in these modest limits, how often have I felt that I had undertaken a work above my strength! How often have I been tempted to renounce this excessive task, and to fly from that abyss which seemed ready to swallow up the passing and shortened years of life, an exhausted patience, and worn-out strength!

But how often also, in the silence of night, under the roof of the old manor-house in which most of these pages have been written, behind the heavy folios in which their acts have been registered by their laborious successors, have I imagined myself to see, appearing around me, that imposing

[11] Job xix. 23, 24.

train of saints, pontiffs, doctors, missionaries, artists, masters of word and deed, who have issued, from age to age, out of the crowded ranks of the monastic orders. I contemplated with trembling these august resuscitated forms of the glorious and unappreciated Past. Their austere yet benevolent looks seemed to stray over their profaned tombs, their forgotten works, the despised monuments of their unwearied industry, the defaced sites of their holy dwellings, and then to rest upon me, their unworthy annalist, confused and overwhelmed by the weight of my unworthiness. I heard a voice, noble and plaintive, come forth from their chaste and masculine breasts: "So many incessant labors, so many evils endured, so many services rendered, so many lives consumed for the glory of God, and for the good of men! and behold the return — calumny, ingratitude, proscription, contempt! In these modern generations, which are at once overwhelmed by our benefits and oblivious of them, will no man rise up to avenge our memory?

'Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor!'

No apology, no panegyric; a simple and exact tale — the truth, and nothing but the truth — justice, nothing but justice, — let that be our sole revenge!"

And then I felt a thrill of ardent and melancholy emotion run through my veins. "I am but a creature of dust," I answer them, "but that dust may perhaps be animated by contact with your sacred bones. Perhaps a spark of your fire may come to light up my soul. I have only a cold and sad pen for my weapon, and I am the first of my blood who has fought with the pen alone. But, notwithstanding, if it serves with honor, it may in its turn become a sword, in the bold and holy warfare of conscience and the disarmed majesty of right, against the triumphant oppression of falsehood and sin.

La Roche-en-Breny, *January*, 1860.

BOOK I.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AFTER THE PEACE OF THE CHURCH.

SUMMARY.

The Roman Empire, converted to Christianity, offers a more sad and surprising spectacle than under the Pagan Cæsars. — The alliance of the priesthood and the Empire hinders neither the ruin of the State nor the servitude of the Church. — The Fathers of the Church unanimously acknowledge the precocious decay of the Christian world. — Action of the imperial power on the Church. — Personal intervention of the Emperors in theology; every heresiarch finds an auxiliary upon the throne; persecutions and oppressions more cruel than before Constantine. — The divinity of the prince still proclaimed under Theodosius. — Civil society, Christian by name, remains subject at heart to Paganism in its most degenerate form. — Uncurbed despotism of the Emperors; tortures of taxation. — Universal destruction in the East; universal confusion in the West. — Military degradation; moral abjectness; derisive equality of the *Roman Citizens;* social impotence of the Roman laws. — Virtue and freedom are only found in the Church, who would not resign herself to the impotence of civil society, but did not succeed in transforming the old imperial world. — In order to preserve the whole of Christendom from the fate of the Lower Empire, two invasions were necessary, that of the Barbarians and that of the Monks.

Ea nobis erepta sunt quæ hominibus non minus quam liberi cara sunt, libertas, honestas, dignitas. — CICERO, *Epist. ad Fam.*, iv. 5.

Our belly cleaveth unto the earth: arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercy's sake. — *Psalm* xliv. 25, 26.

THE Roman people, victorious over all nations, and masters of the world, yet enslaved during three centuries by a series of monsters or madmen, scarcely interrupted by some endurable princes, exhibits in history the greatest wonder of the debasement and downfall of man. The peace of the Church, proclaimed by Constantine in 312, was, on the other hand, a prodigy of the power and goodness of God. The

Empire, vanquished by an unarmed crowd, laid down its arms before the Galilean; persecution, after a crowning paroxysm, the most cruel of all, gave place to protection; humanity breathed again; and truth, sealed by the blood of so many thousand martyrs, after having been sealed by the blood of God made man, could henceforth take freely her victorious flight to the ends of the earth.

Increasing decay of the Empire after Constantine.

However, there is a wonder still greater: it is the rapid and permanent decay of the Roman world after the peace of the Church. Yes, if there is nothing more abject in the annals of cruelty and corruption than the Roman empire from Augustus to Diocletian, there is something more susprising and sadder still — the Roman empire after it became Christian.

How came it that Christianity, drawn from the catacombs to be placed on the throne of the Cæsars, was not able to regenerate souls, in temporal matters as well as in spiritual, to restore to authority its prestige, to the citizen his dignity, to Rome her grandeur, and to civilized Europe the strength to live and defend herself? Why did the imperial power, when reconciled to the Church, fall more and more into contempt and impotence? How is it that the memorable alliance of the priesthood with the Empire, hindered neither the ruin of the State nor the servitude and mutilation of the Church?

Never had there been a revolution more complete; for it was not only her own emancipation which the Church celebrated in seeing Constantine adopt the cross for his standard, it was an intimate and complete alliance between the cross and the imperial sceptre. The Christian religion had scarcely ceased to be proscribed, when already she was patronized, and then dominant. The successor of Nero and Decius seated himself at the first general council, and received the title of Defender of the Sacred Canons. The Roman republic and the Christian republic joined their hands, so to speak, in that of Constantine. Sole head, sole judge, sole legislator of the universe, he consented to take bishops for his counsellors, and to give the force of law to their decrees. The world had one monarch; the monarch was absolute: no man dreamed of disputing or limiting a power which the Church blessed, and which glorified itself by protecting her.

This ideal, so dear to many minds, of a man before whom all men prostrated themselves, and who, master of all these slaves, bowed down in his turn before God, was thus

seen and realized. Such a state of things lasted for two or three centuries, during which time everything fell to pieces in the empire: and the Church has never known a period in which she was more tormented, more agitated, or more compromised.

While imperial Rome sank into degradation,[1] the Church had led the greatest and most noble life, not only, as we picture to ourselves too much, in the depths of the catacombs, but striving heroically and in full day, by suffering and arguments, by eloquence and by courage, by her councils[2] and schools, by her martyrs first and above all, but also by her great apologists, such as St. Irenæus, St. Justin, St. Cyprian, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, and Lactantius, who at once renewed and purified Greek and Latin eloquence. War had succeeded so well with her that when she was offered peace, she already filled all the earth.[3]

Difficult position of the Church.

But after having held out so gloriously through a battle of three centuries, what means could she take for resisting the influence of victory? How maintain her triumph at the height of her combats? How escape succumbing, as all victors here below succumb, to pride and the intoxication of success? For the vigilant and fertile education of warfare, for the holy joys of persecution, for the dignity of permanent and avowed danger, an entirely new condition was substituted, and upon ground full of another description of difficulties. Associated henceforth with the same imperial power which had in vain essayed to destroy her, she became in some degree responsible for a society enervated by three centuries of servitude, and gangrened by all the refinements of corruption. It was not enough for her to govern the ancient world, — she had still to transform and replace it.

It was a formidable task, but not above her power. God

[1] "The Egyptian, prostrated before the beasts of the Nile, outrages humanity less than the age of the Antonines, with its philosophers and its jurisconsults rendering divine honors to the Emperor Commodus." — OZANAM, *La Civilisation Chrétienne au Cinquième Siècle*, t. i. p. 113. We shall be pardoned for quoting incessantly the admirable works of this young writer, who was at once so perfect a Christian, so excellent a writer, so eloquent and sympathetic an orator, and whose premature death is one of the greatest misfortunes that religion and literature have had to deplore in our days.

[2] The collection of P. Labbe counts sixty-two of these previous to the peace of the Church.

[3] "At this time, the Church, still newly-born, filled all the earth." — BOSSUET, *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle.*

chose that very moment to send to His Church a cloud of saints, of pontiffs, of doctors, of orators, and of writers. They formed that constellation of Christian genius which, under the name of Fathers of the Church, have attained the highest place in the veneration of all ages, and forced respect even from the most sceptical. They lighted up the East and the West with the radiance of all that was true and beautiful. They lavished in the service of truth an ardor, an eloquence, and a knowledge, which nothing has ever surpassed. A hundred years after the peace of the Church, they had covered the world with good works and admirable writings, created a refuge for every grief, a guardianship for every weakness, a patrimony for every distress, lessons and examples for every truth and every virtue.

And still they did not succeed in forming a new society, in transforming the pagan world. By their own confession, they fell short of their task.

Corruption of the Christian people.

That long cry of grief which echoes through all the pages which Christian saints and writers have left to us, strikes us at once with an intensity which has never been surpassed in the succession of time. They felt themselves attacked and swallowed up by pagan corruption. Listen to Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine, Salvien especially — listen to them all! They denounced the precocious decay and disgraceful downfall of the Christian people, who had become a prey to vice.[4] They saw with despair the majority of the faithful precipitate themselves into the voluptuousness of paganism. The frightful taste for bloody or obscene spectacles, for the games of the circus, the combats of the gladiators, all the shameful frivolities, all the prostitutions of persecuting Rome, came to assail the new converts, and to subjugate the sons of the martyrs. But a little, and a new Juvenal might have sung the defeat of those who had reconquered the world for God, and the vengeance executed by the genius of evil upon its victors: —

"Victumque ulciscitur orbem."

However great a margin we may leave for exaggeration in these unanimous complaints, they prove not less certainly that the political victory of Christianity, far from having assured the definite triumph of Christian principles in the

[4] "Quam dissimilis est nunc a se ipso populus Christianus, id est, ab eo quod fuit quondam! . . . Quid est aliud pæne omnis cœtus Christianorum quam sentina vitiorum?" — SALVIEN, *De Gubernatione Dei.*

world, had provoked a revival of all the vices which the Christian faith ought to have annihilated.

Action of imperial power upon the Church.

But paganism retained and renewed its empire much more than in merely private and domestic life, by the nature and action of the temporal power in the midst of the Church. No sympton of that transformation to which the idea and exercise of power should one day yield amongst Christian nations, appeared here. Constantine and his successors were baptized: but not the empire nor the imperial power. The hand which opened to Christians the gate of power and favor, was the same which had laid ambushes for them, in which any other than the immortal spouse of Christ must have perished without hope or honor. The emperors aspired to become the masters and oracles of that religion of which they ought only to have been the children, or at most the ministers. Scarcely had they recognized her right to exist, when they believed themselves invested with the right of governing her. The baptized of the evening expected to be the pontiffs and doctors of the following day. Not being able to succeed in that, they began to persecute her on account of Arius, as their predecessors had done on account of Jupiter and Venus.

Constantine himself, the liberator of the Church, the lay president of the Council of Nicæa, was soon tired of the liberty and increasing authority of the new freemen. Won by the ecclesiastical courtiers, who already surrounded his throne, he exiled St. Athanasius, the most noble and pure of Christians. It was even worse under his successors. Let us hear Bossuet on this subject: "The Emperor Constantius put himself at the head of the Arians, and cruelly persecuted the Catholics. . . . This persecution was regarded *as more cruel* than that of Decius and Maximinus, and, in a word, as a prelude to that of Antichrist. . . . Valens, emperor of the East, an Arian like Constantius, was a still more violent persecutor, and it is he of whom it was said that he seemed to soften when he changed the penalty of death into that of banishment!"[5]

The emperor's persecutors.

But more dangerous even than persecution was the invasion of politics into the Church. When, after forty years of disputes, Constantius imposed on the East and West the equivocal formulary of the Council of Rimini, the world, according to the celebrated expression of St. Jerome, groaned

[5] Bossuet, *Cinquième Avertissement aux Protestants*, c. 18.

and was astonished to find itself Arian,[6] thanks to the servile conduct of an Episcopacy which permitted itself to be led and frightened by the eunuchs of the imperial palace.

The trial must have been cruel, for then occurred what never happened before, and has rarely been seen since — a pope gave way to its pressure. Liberius, according to the common opinion, yielded, after a noble resistance, to the torments of exile: he sacrificed, not the truth itself, but the intrepid defender of the truth, Athanasius. He recovered himself, and pledged the infallible authority of his See to no error; he only compromised the fame of his persecutors.[7] But at his name we see a shadow and cloud glide across that column of light which guides the observations of every Catholic when he plunges into the obscurities of history.

Violence, exiles, and massacres, recommenced in the fifth century, and were prolonged from generation to generation. Every heresiarch found an auxiliary on the imperial throne; after Arius, Nestorius; after Nestorius, Eutychus; and thus we proceed from persecution to persecution, until we reach the bloody oppression of the iconoclast emperors, after which nothing could follow but that crowning schism, which separated forever the free and orthodox West from the East, which remained prostrate beneath the double yoke of error and force.

But what evils and bitterness existed during these long and dark centuries, and before that final rupture! They were no longer pagans, but Christians who persecuted Christianity. It was no longer from a prætorium or circus that the emperor, a personification of implacable ancient Rome, sent the Christians to the wild beasts; it was in the midst of Councils, and in the name of a fictitious orthodoxy, that he deliberated his sentences, marked with the triple stamp of chicanery, falsehood, and cruelty. Before coming the length of exile and execution, conscience and intelligence were tortured by their formulas and definitions.

And heterodox theologians.

The finest genius and most noble spirits of that age, which was so fruitful in great men, exhausted themselves in vain in reasoning with these crowned casuists,

[6] "Ingemuit totus orbis et Arianum miratus est se esse." — *Dial. adv. Luc.*, c. 19.

[7] Fleury, *Histoire Ecclésiastique*, liv. xvi. c. 46. Compare Count de Maistre (*Du Pape*, book i. c. 15), who recalls the noble expression of St. Athanasius, speaking of the pontifical weakness of which he had been a victim: "Violence proves the will of the man who causes trembling, but not that of the man who trembles." — *Hist. Arian. ad Monachos*, c. 41.

who dogmatized instead of reigning, and sacrificed in miserable quarrels the majesty of the Church and the security of the State. Exile itself must have been a solace to these holy confessors, obliged to argue respectfully with such antagonists. While the empire fell into decay, and the avenging nations entered on all sides by the breach, these pitiful autocrats, already masters of a clergy which vied in servility with the eunuchs of the imperial antechamber, wrote books of theology, arranged formulas, fabricated and condemned heresies in confessions of faith which were themselves heretical.[8] And as if these crowned theologians were not enough, the empresses too must needs interfere in their turn to govern consciences, define dogmas, and persuade bishops. We see an Ambrose involved in contention with a Justina, and a Chrysostom the victim of the follies of an Eudoxia. Nothing was too insane or too contemptible for this wretched government.

The example of Theodosius may be quoted against us; but what a crimson light is thrown upon the condition of that pretended Christian empire by the celebrated penitence which did so much honor to the great Theodosius and to St. Ambrose! What a society must that have been in which the massacre of a whole town could be decreed in cold blood, to avenge the injury done to a statue! What a tale is that of the torments and sufferings inflicted upon the inhabitants of Antioch before the intervention of the bishop Flavian had appeased the imperial wrath! The horror of such a rule, had it lasted, must have stained for ever the Christianity it affected to adorn. And besides, for one Theodosius, how many were there like Valens, Honorius, and Copronymus! The frightful temptation of possessing omnipotence, turned all these poor heads. The Christian princes were no stronger to resist it than the pagans. To monsters of cruelty and luxury, such as Heliogabalus and Maximinus, succeeded prodigies of imbecility and inconsistency.

The bitterest element for the Church in all this, must have been the pretence of those melancholy masters of the world to serve and favor her. She had to pay very dear for the material support lavished upon her by the imperial power, which protected without honoring and even without understanding her. Every decree made in favor of Christianity

[8] Such were the *Henoticum* of the Emperor Zenon, in 482, condemned by Pope Felix III.; the *Ecthesis* of Heraclius, condemned by Pope John IV.; and the *Type* of Constantine II., condemned by the Pope St. Martin.

— to close the temples, to interdict the sacrifices of the ancient worship, to repress or root out the last remains of paganism — was accompanied or followed by some act intended to affect questions of dogma, of discipline, or of ecclesiastical government. A law of Theodosius II. sentenced heretics to a penal servitude in the mines, and he was himself an Eutychian. Thus heresy, believing itself sufficiently orthodox to proscribe everything that differed from its views, ascended the throne where omnipotence awaited it! The same emperor, and his colleague Valentinian II., decreed the penalty of death for idolatry. But idolatry reigned in their own hearts and around them. The pagan tradition of the divinity of the prince pervaded the Court and all the acts of government.[9] The most pious among them, the great Theodosius himself, spoke unceasingly of their *sacred* palaces, of their *divine* house; they permitted their officials to adore their *eternity*. The same Valentinian, who punished idolaters with death, endeavoring one day to call the Romans to arms against an invasion of Vandals, declared his proclamation to be signed by the *divine hand*, speaking of his own![10]

The divinity of the prince.

Thus the divinity of the prince, that invention of the Cæsars, which had put a seal to the degradation of Rome, and placed slavery under the sanction of idolatry — that hideous chimera which had been the principal pretext of persecution, and which had drunk the blood of so many human victims — still lasted a century after the peace of the Church. Sacrifices were no longer made to the Cæsars after their death, but during their life they were poclaimed divine and eternal. It was only a word, but a word which exhibited the corruption of souls, and the unconcealed thraldom of Christian ideas.

The Church has passed through many trials: she has often been persecuted, often compromised, betrayed, and dishonored by her unworthy ministers. I doubt if ever she stood nearer the brink of that precipice down which God has promised she shall never fall. I doubt if she ever endured a sadder lot than under that long series of monarchs who believed themselves her benefactors and protectors, and who, at the same time, refused to her liberty, peace, and honor.

[9] Franz de Champagny, *De la Charité Chrétienne au* IV^e^ *Siècle*, p. 358.
[10] "Et manu divina: Proponatur," &c. — *Novell.*, tit. xx.

If such were the miseries of the Church, still so young and so near her blood-stained cradle, what must have been the condition of the State, and of lay society? A single word is enough to define it. Paganism existed in undiminished force, as has been demonstrated by one of the most excellent historians of our own age: "Civil society, like religious society, appeared Christian. The sovereigns and the immense majority of the people had embraced Christianity; but, at bottom, civil society was pagan; it retained the institutions, the laws, and the manners of paganism. It was a society which paganism, and not Christianity, had made." [11]

Civil society, Christian in name, continues subject to paganism in its vilest form.

And this paganism, we should not forget, was paganism under its most degenerate form. Men were still at that point where, according to Tacitus, the politics of the wisest consisted in supporting all emperors whatsoever.[12] All the Roman greatness, according to the strong expression of Montesquieu, had only served to satiate the appetite of five or six monsters. After Constantine, the sovereigns were better than these monsters, but the institutions were of less and less value. A hundred and twenty millions of men had still no rights save that of belonging to a single man, to a chance master, called by a caprice of the army, or an intrigue of the court, to the imperial throne. Despotism, as it grew old, became at once feebler and more vexatious. It weighed upon all and protected none. It exhausted a world which it could not even defend. The power of one, says Salvian, is the ruin of the world: "*unius honor, orbis excidium.*" [13] Peace, comfort, and security everywhere disappeared.[14] After the conversion of Constantine, as before him, the bonds of that skilful system of taxation which ended by ruining labor and property in the Roman world, were drawn tighter in every reign. This system, aided by that of the law, raised

[11] Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en France*, lec. ii. He adds: "Christian society is developed later, after the invasion of the barbarians: it belongs to modern history." We must make our acknowledgments here to the eminent man who, nearly thirty years ago, and before any Catholic attempt to regenerate history had been made, did justice to the social *rôle* of the Church, of which he had not the good fortune to be a son — insufficiently, no doubt, but with a boldness and impartiality which has been too little appreciated, even by those whom it most concerned.

[12] "Bonos imperatores voto expetere, qualescumque tolerare." — *Histor.*, iv. 8.

[13] *De Gubernat. Dei*, iv. 4.

[14] "In omni ferme orbe Romano pax et securitas non sunt." — Salvian, *De Gubernat. Dei*, vii. 1.

an emperor to be the sole representative of the sovereign people, and supreme proprietor of all the wealth of the empire. The impost absorbed all that accusations and confiscations had left of the patrimony of free men. Lactantius says it was necessary to buy even the liberty of breathing. According to Zozimus,[15] the fathers prostituted their daughters to have means to pay the tax. The proprietor and the citizen were nothing more than public debtors, and were treated with all the barbarity which the old Romans used to their debtors. They were thrown into prison, scourged, their wives scourged, and their children sold.[16] Torture was universally employed as a means of tax-gathering; formerly reserved for slaves, its use was extended to all the citizens.[17] It is thus that absolute power understands and practises equality.

The Roman republic, says Salvian, expired even when she seemed still living, strangled by taxation, like the traveller who dies in the grasp of brigands. The empire, which originated amid the proscriptions of the triumvirate, worthily completed its work by a fiscal system which seemed to its despairing victims a universal proscription.[18]

Universal debasement and despair.

The administrative system of Diocletian, aggravated by the Christian emperors, and brought to perfection by Justinian, became thus the scourge of the world. We see in Eumenes, in Lactantius, and in Sal-

[15] *Histor.*, ii. 38.

[16] The following incident bears indirectly upon our subject, and shows the condition of Roman and Christian Egypt in the fourth century. A brigand who had become a monk of the Thebaid, relates the following tale to the celebrated abbot Paphnuce: "Inveni aliquam formosam mulierem errantem in solitudine, fugatam ab apparitoribus et curialibus præsidis et senatorum, *propter publicum mariti debitum.* Sciscitatus sum ex ea causam fletus. Illa dixit. . . . Cum maritus tempore biennii ob debitum publicum trecentorum aureorum sæpe fuerit flagellatus, et in carcere inclusus, et tres mihi carissimi filii venditi fuerint, ego recedo fugitiva . . . etiam errans per solitudinem sæpe inventa et *assidue flagellata*, jam tres dies permansi jejuna." The brigand had pity on this victim of the magistrates: he gave her the gold which he had stolen, and sheltered her and her children from all outrage: *citra probrum et contumeliam.* To this touch of pity he owed the mercy of God, and his conversion. — PALLADIUS, *Historia Lausiaca*, c. 63.

[17] Exemption from torture became the privilege of the nobles and municipal magistrates, and of children; but this privilege was suppressed in the case of high treason.

[18] "Extremum spiritum agens, in ea parte qua adhuc vivere videtur, tributorum vinculis quasi prædonum manibus strangulata." — *De Gubernat. Dei*, iv. 6. "Jam vero illud quam sævum, quam alienum a Barbaris, quam familiare Romanis, quod se invicem exactione proscribunt." — *Ibid.*, v. 4. See all the books of this treatise for the description of the fiscal exactions of which the imperial subjects were the victims.

vian, who wrote more than a century after the conversation of Constantine, the picture of that oppression, the most ingenious and cruel which has ever crushed a civilized people. But it is not in the Fathers or historians, but in the very text of the imperial laws, that we find the most eloquent representation of these disgraceful plagues of the Roman world. The hypocrisy of the language then used does not suffice to disguise the brutality of the facts, nor the horrible nature of the universal slavery.[19]

The aristocracy, the first victim of despotism, deprived at once of power and independence, and replaced everywhere by officials, was smothered under the pompous and ridiculous titles of *excellency*, *eminence*, *serenity*, *clarissimus*, *perfectissimus*, which concealed their nonenity from no one, but the usurpation of which, even by carelessness or ignorance, was punished as a sacrilege. The citizens of the towns, held responsible for the taxes, and condemned to the magistracy as to the galleys, suffered, under the name of *curials*, an oppression skilfully organized, and applied without pity. A law of the two sons of Theodosius punished, by the confiscation of his goods, the impiety of the unfortunate rich man who fled out of those towns, transformed into prisons, to take refuge in the country.[20]

In the country there was no longer anything to distinguish the cultivators from the slaves; and the agricultural population, exhausted by the abominable fiscal exactions, without protection and without encouragement, grew disgusted with their labor, and fled into the woods. Those who revolted were sure of being pursued and murdered, under the name of Bagaudes, like so many wild beasts. Others preferred the rule of the Barbarians, and anticipated that rule by fleeing to them: that captivity seemed to them less dreadful than imperial slavery, and their sole wish was never again to become Romans.[21] It is not rare, says Orosius, to find

[19] See especially that fine chapter of the *Histoire des Origines Merovingiennes* of Le Hueron, entitled "Des Véritable Causes de la Dissolution de l'Empire Romain," vol. i. p. 120–153.

[20] "Curiales: . . . jubemur moneri ne civitates fugiant aut deserant, rus habitandi causa; fundum quem civitati prætulerint scientes fisco esse sociandum, eoque rure esse carituros, cujus causâ *impios* se, vitando patriam demonstrarint." — *L. Curiales*, 2 Cod. Theod., lib. 12, tit. 18, *Si curiales*.

[21] "Malunt sub specie captivitatis vivere liberi, quam sub specie libertatis esse captivi. . . . Unum illic omnium Romanorum votum est, ne unquam eos necesse sit in jus transire Romanum." — Salvian, *op. cit.*, v. 5, 8. "Interdum vi nimiæ amaritudinis etiam adventum hostium postulantes." — *Ibid.*, vii. 16. "Jam inveniuntur inter eos Romani qui malint inter Barbaros pau-

Romans who prefer a free poverty among the Barbarians to the anguish of a life tormented by the exactions of Rome. Bossuet describes the circumstances in two words: "Everything perished in the East: . . . All the West was a desert."[22] Labor withdrew; the soil remained uncultivated; the population declined. Impotence, decay, and death were everywhere. The provinces which the barbarians and imperial officers vied in invading and wasting, had not even energy enough to shake off the yoke. "The world is dying in Rome," said the lords of Gaul to the Emperor Avitus,[23] and Rome herself seemed condemned to die abandoned by her emperors, and ravished by the Goths. Nothing remained to her of those noble days in which Roman liberty and civic majesty threw forth upon human nature a light which, thank God, cannot be forgotten.

Of those two great things, the greatest perhaps in profane history, the Roman senate and people, *senatus populusque Romanus*, we have thus ascertained the fate of one. As for the senate, more degraded still, if possible, than the people, it interfered in the government only to sanction every crime and reward every baseness. It existed during the five centuries between Augustus and Augustulus, without leaving a single act or discussion worthy of recollection. On the other hand, its records register carefully the number of acclamations with which it saluted the new emperors, and of curses with which it pursued the fallen sovereigns, even those to whom it had paid most slavish adulation. Excluded from all political power from the times of Diocletian, it existed only as a kind of great municipal council, charged with the task of dishonoring in history the name and title of the most august assembly which has ever governed men.

The Senate.

Nothing has ever equalled the abject condition of the Romans of the Empire. Free, they had conquered and governed the world; enslaved, they could not even defend themselves. They tried a change of masters; they gave themselves two, and then four: they redoubled despotism in all its shapes; nothing would do. With the ancient freedom, all virtue, all manliness disappeared. There remained only a society of officials, without strength, without honor, and without rights.

I say without rights, for in all the imperial world no one

perem libertatem, quam inter Romanos tributariam solicitudinem sustinere." — Oros., *Hist.*, vii. 41.

[22] *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle*. 1st part, xi. ep.; 3d part, chap. 7.

[23] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Paneg. d'Avitus*.

possessed even a shadow of a serious and inviolable right. I affirm it boldly, despite all the learned panegyrists of that rule. The Roman empire, type and cradle of all modern servitude, has found numerous apologists and admirers in these days, thanks to the readiness with which the task of justifying the present by theories borrowed from the past is now undertaken. The progress of civil law and democratic equality, regarded by them as the highest expression of Roman civilization, has been specially dwelt upon.

Social powerlessness of Roman law.

But Roman law, which aided the patricians to organize, under the republic, the freest and strongest government which history has known, changed its face and nature under the empire.

How absurd and chimerical were the teachings or practice of civil law in a state where the person and property of every citizen might be delivered, without debate or any appeal whatever, to the will of the worst villains whom the world has ever seen! The criminal law, so humane, so protecting, and so liberal up to the time of the proscriptions, had become in the hands of the emperors a system which, according to the strong expression of Bacon,[24] tortured the laws in order to torture men. As for political law, it was given up to such anarchy that, of the thirty-four emperors who reigned from Commodus to Diocletian, in the golden age of Roman jurisprudence, thirty were killed by their successors. I confess I do not know in all history a spectacle more repulsive or grotesque than that of the labors of all these jurisconsults, who, on questions of usufruct and usucapion, trusteeships and interdicts, could split a hair, but who could not, during five centuries, discover the least barrier to the sanguinary violence of a horde of Prætorians, nor to the monstrous caprices of a Heliogabalus or of a Commodus.

Chimera of equality.

As for equality, it had no other guarantee than the title of Roman citizen, prostituted by Caracalla as a supreme derision to the enslaved world. This worthy successor of that Cæsar who had thoughts of making his horse a consul, knew well what he did in bestowing upon all the provincials exempted from certain imposts, the full civic right of paying to the treasury all that the treasury exacted. The people who were honored by that title knew also how much it was worth. The name of "Roman citizen," Salvian

[24] See the learned *Essai sur les Lois Criminelles des Romains*, by Edouard la Boulaye, distinguished by the Institute. 1845.

tells us, hitherto so much esteemed and dearly purchased, was regarded now not only as a vain and disgraceful title, but as a kind of abomination.[25]

Moral debasement.

Let us pass over the decay of the arts, the meanness of literature, the non-existence of the sciences; but we must acknowledge that in this so-called Christian society, the moral poverty is a thousand times greater than the material, and that servitude has crushed souls even more than bodies. Everything is enervated, attenuated and decrepid. Not a single great man or illustrious individual rises to the surface of that mire. Eunuchs and sophists of the Court govern the State without control, experiencing no resistance but from the Church. After Theodosius, the throne of Constantine acquired a degree of public respect only by the brief reign of Pulcheria, a truly Christian woman and saint. But if, here and there, a great captain, a man of heart and talent, rises above the crowd, we see him fall like Stilicho, like Aetius, like Belisarius, under the murderous jealousy of a master who cannot tolerate either a power or fame which is not his own by the side of his omnipotence. While they live, their renown procures them only proscription, and even death does not suffice to give it lustre. The infected air they breathed seems to have paled their glory: it has neither distinction nor charm in history.

Virtue and liberty to be found only in the Church.

To discover some trace of that greatness and strength which are the legitimate inheritance of the most noble creature of God, we must turn to the Church. There alone, in the various orders of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and despite the yoke of the theological emperors, it was still possible to live, to struggle, and even to shine.

The great and the small, the last scions of the patricians of Rome, the old races of the conquered countries, the plebeians of all the provinces who had been dignified *en masse* with the despised title of Roman citizens, after that name had lost all its value, — all could seek again their lost dignity and forfeited freedom in the city of God. The Church alone offered a sufficient sustenance to all the energy, activity, intelligence, and self-devotion which remained among them: for she invited all to an inexhaustible series of sacrifices and victories. Genius, glory, virtue, courage, freedom — all that makes life honorable, even in a human point of view — was to be found only in the Church, amid these great controversies, and incessant struggles for the salvation of souls and

[25] *De Guberant. Dei*, v.

the triumph of truth, in which she had always reason, genius, and right on her side, though these were not enough to gain her cause before the throne of her protectors.

Civil society ought not to be condemned to nullity.

But God, by the side of the spiritual society instituted and regulated by Himself, has created temporal society; and if he has there, as everywhere, reserved to Himself, the secret conduct of events, and the charge of striking the great blows of his infallible justice, He has given up its ordinary government to the free and intelligent activity of man. To withdraw life, or all that makes life valuable, from this temporal society — to reduce it to stagnation, servitude, indifference, and moral misery — to recognize in spiritual society only the right of living and increasing, and in religious controversy alone the means of moving souls to impassioned sentiments — is to thrust humanity to the edge of a precipice. This condition, as well as its contrary excess, is to be seen repeatedly in history; but such a state of things is repugnant to the laws of creation. It is neither in conformity with the will of God, nor the interest of the Church, to condemn civil society to the condition of a nonenity. A man has other rights than that of choosing between the priesthood and slavery. There is nothing which approaches nearer to heaven than a monastery inhabited by monks who have willingly separated themselves from the world; but to transform the world into a cloister, peopled by unwilling monks, would be to create beforehand a counterfeit hell. God has never made the slavery and degradation of the world a condition of the liberty of His Church. Happily, other times shall follow, in which, by the side of a Church triumphant, free, and fertile, shall rise a society ardent and humble in its faith, but also energetic, warlike, generous, and manly, even in its errors; in which authority shall be at once sanctified and limited, and freedom ennobled by sacrifice and charity; in which heroes shall crowd upon saints; in which cloisters, however closely peopled, shall no longer be the sole asylum for upright and noble souls; in which many men — not all, but many — shall regain the full command of themselves; in which the sovereigns shall have to render an account to their people, the strong to the feeble, and all to God.

The Church does not succeed in regenerating the Empire.

In the fourth and fifth centuries the very dawning of that necessary renovation was not yet visible. The old imperial world existed still. Christianity had accepted that abject condition, as it accepts all, with the supernatural confidence of aiding what

was good in it, and of lessening the evil. But despite her divine force and origin — despite the humble and zealous devotion of the Fathers and pontiffs to the decrepid majesty of the Cæsars — despite her men of genius and her saints — Christianity did not succeed in transforming the ancient world. Had she succeeded in taking full possession, with the elements which then constituted it, she could only have made a kind of Christian China. God spared her that abortion: but the history of this period remains an ever memorable example of the powerlessness of genius and sanctity to overcome the corruption engendered by despotism.

The old world was then at the point of death. The empire gave way slowly, in shame and contempt, stricken by a melancholy weakness which did not even inspire pity. Everything dropped into incurable decay. Such was the fate of the Roman empire two centuries after it had become Christian. In spiritual affairs it was on the road to that schism which, under the Byzantine Cæsars, separated from unity and truth more than half of the world converted by the apostles. In temporal affairs it issued in the miserable *regime* of the Lower Empire, the hardest censure we can pronounce upon which, is to name its name.

In order that the Church should save society, a new element was necessary in the world, and a new force in the Church. Two invasions were required — that of the Barbarians from the north, and that of the monks from the south.

The Barbarians were necessary.

They came; — first the Barbarians. Behold them struggling with the Romans, enervated by slavery, and with the emperors, powerless in the midst of their omnipotence.

First obscure, victims and prisoners disdained by the first Cæsars; then auxiliaries, by turns sought and feared; then irresistible adversaries; at last victors and masters of the humiliated empire: they come, not as a torrent which passes on, but as a flood which advances, draws back, returns, and finally remains master of the invaded soil. They advance, they withdraw, they return, they remain and triumph. Those among them who were desirous of arresting their course and allying themselves with the terrified Romans, are in their turn set aside, passed over, and surmounted by the tide which follows. Behold them! They come down the valley of the Danube, which puts them on the road to Byzantium and Asia Minor; they ascend its tributary streams, and thus reach the summits of the Alps, from whence they burst upon Italy. They pass the Rhine, cross the Vosges, the Ceven-

nes, the Pyrenees, and inundate Gaul and Spain. The East imagined that it would be spared: vain delusion! The storm bursts from the heights of Caucasus, and overflows these regions in their turn. The wolves of the north (thus St. Jerome entitles them), after having devoured everything, come to drink in the waters of the Euphrates. Egypt, Phœnicia, Palestine — all the countries which they do not visit in their first incursion — are already taken captive by fear. It is not one nation alone, like the Roman people, but twenty different and independent races. "For many years," says St. Jerome again, "Roman blood has flowed daily under the blows of the Goth, of the Sarmatian, of the Quadi, of the Alan, of the Hun, of the Vandal, of the Marcoman."[26] It is not the army of a single conqueror like Alexander and Cæsar; there are twenty kings unknown but intrepid, having soldiers and not subjects, accountable for their authority to their priests and warriors, and obliged by force of perseverance and audacity to earn a pardon for their power. They all obey an irresistible instinct, and unconsciously carry with them the destinies and institutions of the Christendom to come.

What we owe to them.

Visible instruments of divine justice, they come by intuition to avenge the nations oppressed and the martyrs slain. They shall destroy, but it will be to give a substitute for that which they have destroyed; and, besides, they will kill nothing that deserves to live, or that retains the conditions of life. They shall shed blood in torrents, but they shall renew by their own blood the exhausted sap of Europe. They bring with them fire and sword, but also strength and life. Through a thousand crimes and a thousand evils, they shall reveal, though still under a confused form, two things which Roman society has ceased to know — the dignity of man, and the respect for woman. They have instincts rather than principles to guide them; but when these instincts shall have been fertilized and purified by Christianity, out of them shall spring Catholic chivalry and royalty. One sentiment above all shall be derived from them, which was unknown in the Roman empire, which perhaps even the most illustrious pagans were strangers to, and which is always incompatible with despotism — the sentiment of honor: "That secret and profound spring of modern society,

[26] "Quotidie Romanus sanguis effunditur. . . . Ecce tibi ex ultimis Caucasi rupibus immissi in nos . . . septentrionis lupi." — S. Hieron., *De Laude Nepotiani*, c. ii. Comp. *Epist. ad Ocean. de Vita S. Fabiolæ.*

which is nothing else than the independence and inviolability of the human conscience, superior to all powers, all tyrannies, and all external force." [27]

They carry with them, in addition, freedom — not certainly such freedom as we have since conceived and possessed, but the germs and conditions of all freedom; that is to say, the spirit of resistance to excessive power, a manful impatience of the yoke, and a profound consciousness of personal right, and the individual value of every soul before other men as before God.[28]

Freedom and honor! Rome and the world had been bankrupt in these qualities since the times of Augustus. We owe these gifts to our ancestors, the Barbarians.

In a purely religious point of view, more than one great heart among the Christians had recognized at once the mysterious characteristics by which God had distinguished those races which seemed to proceed only out of His wrath. With a confidence which was not shaken by the fury of the hurricane which crossed their path, and which lasted two centuries, this discovery was declared. Amid the calamities and sufferings of the first invasion of the Goths, St. Augustine remarked the marvellous forbearance of the soldiers of Alaric before the tombs of the martyrs: he even went so far as to speak of the mercy and humility of these terrible victors.[29] Salvian does not hesitate to say that the Barbarians, even heretics, led a better life than the Romans, even those who were orthodox. "Their modesty," he says elsewhere, "purifies the earth, all stained by Roman debauchery." [30] Paul Orosius, a disciple of St. Augustine, compared them to Alexander, and to the Romans of the republican times; and he adds: "The Germans now overturn the world, but if (which God forbid!) they end by remaining its masters, and govern it according to their own customs, posterity perhaps will one day salute with the title of great kings those in whom we can only see enemies."

Let us not exaggerate, however, nor anticipate the truth.

[27] Ozanam, *La Civilisation Chrétienne au v^e^ Siècle.*

[28] "The Germans have given us the spirit of freedom, such as we know and realize it at the present time, the right and possession of each individual, master of himself and of his actions and destiny, so long as he wrongs no other. . . . It is to German customs that this distinctive character of our civilization is traceable. The fundamental idea of freedom, in modern Europe, came to it from its conquerors." — Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en France*, leç. vii.

[29] "Misericordia et humilitas etiam immanium Barbarorum." — *De Civit. Dei*, i. 4. Compare cap. 1 et 7.

[30] *De Gubernat. Dei*, v. 2; vii. 6.

The germs only of the great conquests of the future existed amid the fermentation of these confused and turbulent masses. At the first glance, it is cruelty, violence, a love of blood and devastation which seems to animate them; and, as among all savages, these explosions of natural brutality are allied to all the refinements of deceit.

Their vices and crimes.

These undaunted men, who knew so well how to vindicate human dignity against their sovereigns, respected it so little that they slaughtered entire populations as if for sport. These warriors, who knelt around their prophetesses, and recognized something sacred in woman,[31] made their captives too often the playthings of their lust or cruelty,[32] and their kings at least practised polygamy.

In respect to Christianity, their attitude was uncertain, their adhesion tardy and equivocal. If there were early Christians among the Goths — if, from the beginning of the peace of the Church, German bishops appeared in the Councils of Arles, Nicæa, and Sardica — if, at the sack of Rome in 410, Alaric commanded the Church, the sacred vessels, and the Christian women to be respected — if the barbaric nations as a whole, personified by their two most formidable chiefs, seemed to stand arrested before St. Leo, who alone could control Genseric, and make Attila fall back — it is not the less true that two centuries of invasions into the bosom of the Christian world had not sufficed to identify the victors with the religion of the vanquished. The Saxons, the Franks, the Gepides, and the Alans remained idolaters; and, a thousand times worse, in proportion as these people were converted to Christianity, they became the prey of a miserable heresy. Truth served them only as a bridge from one abyss to another. When it was repressed by Theodosius in the empire, Arianism turned aside to seduce and govern the future victors of the empire. The Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, the Herules, the Burgundians, became Arians. Euric and the Sueves in Spain, Genseric and the Vandals in Africa, sacrificed thousands of martyrs to that doctrine which was the idol of all tyrants, because it encouraged at the same time the revolt of reason against faith, and the usurpations of secular power upon the Church.

And soon the corruption of Roman manners pressed upon and infected these young and passionate races. Their energetic vitality abandoned itself to the caresses of a decrepid

[31] "Inesse quin etiam sanctum aliquid." — TACITUS, *De Mor. German.*

[32] See, among other examples, the atrocious sufferings inflicted upon three hundred Frank maidens given as hostages to the Thuringians.

civilization. Conquest was on the point of becoming a lawless revel, and the world was in danger of having changed its masters without changing its destiny.

Who then shall discipline these indomitable races? Who shall shape them to the great art of living and governing? Who shall teach them to found kingdoms and commonwealths? Who shall soften without enervating them? Who shall preserve them from contagion? Who shall prevent them from precipitating themselves into corruption, and rotting before they were ripe?

The monks came, and, united to the Barbarians, aided the Church to constitute Christendom.

It will be the Church, but the Church by the monks. From the depths of the deserts of Egypt and the East, God brought forth a host of black-robed men, more intrepid and patient, more indefatigable and less indulgent to themselves, than Romans or Barbarians ever were. They spread themselves noiselessly over all the empire, and when the hour of its ruin had come, they are to be found everywhere, in the West as well as in the East. The Barbarians came: and in proportion to their progress, by their side, before, behind, wherever they had passed with fire and death, other armies come to encamp in silence, other colonies form, arrange, and devote themselves to heal the miseries of invasion, and to gather the fruits of victory. At length, when the destroyers had invaded, ravaged, and conquered everything, a great man will appear. Benedict is destined to be the legislator of labor, of voluntary continence and poverty; he shall count his children, who shall be also his soldiers, by thousands. From among the Barbarians themselves his followers shall arise; their chief shall one day fall at his feet. He will raise him up as a vassal and auxiliary. He will write a rule which, during six centuries, shall light Europe like a Pharos of salvation, and be the law, the force, and the life of those pacific legions, which were destined in their turn to inundate Europe, but only to fertilize her, to raise her ruins, to cultivate her devastated fields, people her deserts, and conquer her conquerors.

The Roman empire, without the Barbarians, was an abyss of servitude and corruption. The Barbarians, without the monks, were chaos. The Barbarians and the monks united re-created a world which was to be called Christendom.[33]

[33] This First Book appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* of the 1st January, 1855.

BOOK II.

MONASTIC PRECURSORS IN THE EAST.

SUMMARY.

Origin of monastic life in antiquity, in the ancient law, in the Gospel. — It is originated by Jesus Christ. — The monks appear to succeed the martyrs and restrain the Barbarians. — Martyrdom of St. Febronia, nun at Nisibis. — THE FATHERS OF THE DESERT. — THE THEBAID. — ST. ANTHONY, the first of the abbots: his influence in the Church; multitude of his disciples; his struggle against Arianism. — ST. PAUL, first hermit. — St. Pacome, author of the first written rule, founder of Tabenne. — The two Ammons. — The two Macarii. — Meeting with a tribune upon the Nile. — Prodigious number of monks of the Thebaid: their laborious life, their charity, their studies, their zeal for the orthodox faith. — St. Athanasius concealed in the Thebaid. — Paradise in the desert. — NUNNERIES in Egypt: Alexandra, Euphrosyne. — Converted courtesans; Pelagia. — St. Euphrasia. — The monks of Sinai. — Hilarion introduces monastic life into Palestine. — Hilarion and Epiphanius in the island of Cyprus. — St. Ephraim in Mesopotamia. — St. Simeon Stylites in Syria. — Martyr monks in Persia. — ST. BASIL AND ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS in Cappadocia: their friendship, their monastic life, their part in the Church. — Violent opposition against the monks among the pagans and Arians, the rhetoricians and sophists, and among many Christians. — ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM constitutes himself their apologist: his treatise against the detractors of monastic life. — His conduct towards them as Archbishop of Constantinople. — He is maltreated by the monks at Cæsarea. — The monks at Antioch under Theodosius. — Telemachus puts a stop to the fights of the gladiators. — DECAY OF THE MONKS OF THE EAST, who end by becoming slaves of Islamism and accomplices of schism.

Lo maggior don, che Dio per sue larghezze
Fesse creando, ed alla sua bontate
Più conformato, e quel ch' ei più apprezza,
Fu della volontà la libertate,
Di che le creature intelligenti
E tutte, e sole, furo e son dotate.

Or ti parrà, se tu quinci argomenti,
L' alto valor del voto, s' è sì fatto,
Che Dio consenta, quando tu consenti.
Che nel fermar tra Dio e l' uomo il patto
Vittima fassi di questo tesoro.

DANTE, *Parad.*, c. v.

THE monks were now in conflict with the Barbarians. In the fourth century began that apostolical struggle and mis-

sion, which continued till the twelfth century, and ended only after the final constitution of Catholic Europe.

Definition of the monastic condition.

But whence came the monks? and what is a monk? It is important to answer this question briefly. A monk is a Christian who puts himself apart from the world, in order more surely to work out his eternal salvation. He is a man who withdraws from other men, not in hatred or contempt of them, but for the love of God and his neighbor, and to serve them so much the better, as he shall have more and more purified and regulated his soul.

This idea of retirement and solitude is the root of the very name of monk, which comes from the Greek word μόνος, solitary. But as many Christians have in all ages obeyed the same impulse, these solitaries have joined each other; they have thus reconstituted the social life from which they appeared to flee; and that life, founded upon an absolute community in thought and action, has formed the basis and strength of the monastic condition.

But it was not enough for a monk to separate himself from the world; he had also to abstain from what is lawful in the world. The monk is, then, essentially, a man who deprives himself of that which he might enjoy without reproach. He accepts not only the precepts of the Gospel, but its advice. To avoid what is forbidden, he renounces what is permitted. To reach goodness, he aspires to perfection. To make sure of his salvation, he would do more than is necessary to save him. He binds himself to a kind of chastity, of submission, and of poverty, not required from all Christians. He renounces, by a generous effort of his free choice, the ties of marriage and family, individual property, and personal will; and he puts this triple sacrifice under the safeguard of an irrevocable promise, of a vow. Having thus triumphed over his body by continence, over his soul by obedience, and over the world by voluntary poverty, he comes three times a victor, to offer himself to God, and to take his place in the first rank of that army which is called the Church.

This condition of life is as old as the world. It has two origins — a natural, and a supernatural.

Origin of the monastic order.

Yes; this life of solitude and privation, so contrary in appearance to all the inclinations of man, finds its root in human nature itself. All men, at some certain moment of their life, have felt that mysterious and powerful attraction towards solitude. Every nation has

recognized and honored it; all religions have adopted and sanctioned it. The philosophers and moralists of paganism have emulated each other in glorifying that impulse of nature. The oriental world pursued it passionately. India, for three thousand years, has had her ascetics, who pushed to delirium the science of mortification and the practice of voluntary chastisements. They are still to be found, wandering over the world, or living in vast communities in all the nations which recognize the law of Buddha. They have produced nothing, preserved nothing; the pride of error, and the corruption of idleness, have rendered them useless to the human mind as to society; but, even in their abject condition, they bear an immortal testimony to that profound instinct of the soul which the only true religion has transferred into an inexhaustible source of virtues and benefits.

In antiquity.

In the midst of ancient civilization, Pythagoras and his disciples, who already went by the name of cenobites,[1] Plato in his *Republic*, Epictetus in his *Cebetis Tabula*, and many others, have recommended this manner of existence as the last goal of wisdom. But Christianity alone has known how to discipline these fugitive impressions, to give them an efficacious bearing and a permanent energy, by the institution of the monastic order. She alone was entitled to offer a divine sanction, an infallible aim, and an eternal recompense, to that inclination of nature acknowledged by all.

In the ancient law.

By the side of this purely human and natural origin of the monastic life, we must also acknowledge one supernatural and celestial. In the ancient law, where everything is a figure or symbol of the new law, models of a solitary and tranquil life consecrated entirely to the cultivation of the soul, are already to be found. Samuel, in whom the chain of prophets properly commences, Elijah especially, then St. John the Baptist,[2] have been regarded by many, and not without reason, as the types and first masters of monastic life.

The apostle himself describes to us the prophets clad in goatskins, wandering in the deserts, on the mountains, in the caves and dens of the earth.[3] St. Augustine shows them sequestered from the people, buried in retirement, far from

[1] Jamblic., *De Vit. Pithag.*, 5.

[2] The Greek Fathers have entitled him *Prince of anchorites and Prince of monks.*

[3] "In sheepskins and goatskins; . . . they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." — Heb. xi. 37, 38.

cities, forming communities and schools, vowed to prayer, to labor with their hands, and to study.[4] They were clothed in sackcloth or the skins of beasts.[5] Their poverty was visible in all their life. Elisha had for furniture only a pallet, a table, a chair, and a candlestick.[6] He accepted no presents except barley-bread and a little meal, such as are given to the poor.[7] The frugality of the prophets was not less remarkable. The angel gave Elijah only bread and water for a long journey. Obadiah, the steward of Ahab, a man who feared God, says Scripture, nourished a hundred prophets with bread and water in a cave. Elisha cooked wild herbs for the food of his brethren, the sons of the prophets.[7a]

Another example less known is that of the Rechabites.[7b] Nine hundred years before Christ, in the time of Jehu, king of Israel, Jonadab the son of Rechab, a just man, interdicted his descendants from living under a roof, from drinking wine, and from possessing lands, and bound them to dwell apart, under tents, all the days of their life. Three centuries afterwards, Jeremiah found them scrupulously faithful to the rule prescribed by their ancestor, and addressed to them, in the name of God, these words — "Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, . . . therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me forever."[8]

Perhaps we might trace in them, if not the ancestors, at least the models of the Essenes and Therapeutists, the monks of Judaism, who lived, the first in the times of the Maccabees, upon the shores of the Dead Sea, and the last, two centuries later, in Asia Minor and Egypt. Both lived in the desert, in cells, preserving celibacy, renouncing property, pleasure, and delicate food, and concentrating their time to manual labor or to the study of the Holy Scriptures. Porphyry, and Pliny the naturalist, have spoken with admiration of the Essenes.[9] Philo, the most eloquent of the Jews,[10] has de-

[4] *De Civit. Dei*, xviii. 41.

[5] Isa. xx. 2; Dan. ix. 3; Zech. xiii. 4. Compare Rev. xi. 3, and 2 Kings, i. 8.

[6] 2 Kings iv. 10. [7] Verse 42. [7a] Verse 39.

[7b] Bossuet ranks them with the monks in this passage of the *Elevations*: — "If the Rechabites and the monks are justly so scrupulous, and so much ashamed of breaking their rules, how much should we tremble lest we fail in obedience to the law of God," &c. — XV*th Sem 7th Elevat.*

[8] Jer. xxxv. 18, 19.

[9] Porphyr., *De Abstinentia*, iv. 11; Plin., *Hist. Natur.*, v.; Thonissen, *Encycl. Popul.*, t. i. p. 86.

[10] Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa*, lib. i. Compare Pallad., *Hist. Lausiaca*, c. 7.

scribed the pure and self-denying life of the Therapeutists; he shows them inhabiting cells upon an eminence beyond the Lake Mœris, precisely upon the Mount Nitria, so celebrated since then in the history of the Fathers of the desert. Eusebius, it is known, made them out to be Christians, and the evangelist St. Mark has been supposed their founder.[11] This opinion appears ill-founded. It is difficult, however, not to see in these solitaries the direct precursors of the monastic order.

In the Gospel.

But it belonged to the Gospel to fertilize, to perfect, and to perpetuate these examples. The words of the Redeemer, the Son of God, are express. He said to the young noble, whom he loved at the first glance, and who asked of him the way to life eternal — "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."[12] And again — "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, *with persecutions;* and in the world to come, eternal life."[13] Since these divine words were diffused through the world, men have been found, who, far from being repelled by the sternness of the language, or saddened as he was who heard it first,[14] have felt in it a sweetness and attraction beyond all the seductions of the world, and who, throwing themselves in a multitude into the narrow way, have undertaken to prove that there is nothing impracticable to human weakness in the counsels of evangelical perfection. This has been found to be the case during eighteen centuries, and is still so, despite the dislike and prohibitions of the false wisdom of modern times. Governed by these words of the Gospel, the most illustrious fathers, doctors, and councils, have declared religious life to be founded by Jesus Christ himself, and first practised by His apostles. The highest authorities have agreed to

The monastic life instituted by Jesus Christ.

[11] S. Hieronym., *De Script. Eccles. in Marco;* Euseb., *Hist. Ecclesiast.*, 17. St. Epiphanius, Sozomenes, Cassianus, say the same. Compare D. Calmet, *Dict. de la Bible*, v° *Thérapeutes;* Henric. Valesh, *Annot. in Euseb.*, p. 35. Compare Doellinger, *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, p. 759.

[12] Mark x. 21. Compare Matth. xix. 21; Luke xviii. 22.

[13] Mark x. 29, 30.

[14] "This is a hard saying." — John vi. 60. "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." — Mark x. 22.

recognize that it was born with the Church, and that it has never ceased to co-exist with her.[15]

It may be said of it, as of the Church herself, that it exists by right divine.[16]

We know with certainty, by the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles, that the first Christians lived as the monks have lived since. Coming forth from the guest-chamber, they to whom had been given the happiness of seeing the Lord Jesus with their own eyes, and who listened every day to the words of the apostles, had but one heart and one soul: they put everything in common — fortune, prayer, labor — they sold all their goods to consecrate the produce to the common need, and thus destroyed at a blow both poverty and riches. It is said expressly, and more than once repeated, that all who believed lived in this fashion.[17] History has not recorded how these bonds relaxed and were dissolved at last, but we can understand how they became impossible, in proportion as the number of Christians increased, and in presence of family rights and interests; at any rate, they lasted long enough to authorize Eusebius and St. Jerome in asserting that the first-known monks were no other than the first disciples of Jesus Christ.[18]

We might even affirm, that during the three first centuries all Christians retained a certain monastic character. They were austere and even rigid in the severity of their faith and the young ardor of their enthusiasm. They remained pure in the depths of universal corruption. Their life was more or less hidden amid pagan society. They were of that old

[15] "Philosophiam a Christo introductam." — S. Joan. Chrysost., *Hom.* 17 *ad Popul. Antioch;* S. Hieron., Epist. 120 (alias 150), 118, 130. "Primum in Ecclesia, imo a quo cœpit Ecclesia . . . cujus apostoli institutores . . . exstiterunt." — S. Bernard., *Apolog. ad Guill. Abbat.*, c. 10. "Cœnobitarum disciplina a tempore prædicationis apostolicæ sumpsit exordium." — Cassian., *Collation*, 18, c. 5. "Sacrum quoque monasticum ordinem a Deo inspiratum, et ab ipsis apostolis fundatum." — *Concil. ad Theod. Villam.*, an. 844, c. 3.

[16] "Status religiosus secundum se et quoad substantiam suam ab ipso Christo immediate traditus et institutus fuit, atque ita dici potest esse de jure divino, non præcipiente, sed consulente." — Suarez., *Tractatus* vii. lib. 3, c. 2.

[17] "And all that believed were together; and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. . . . And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things common. . . . Neither was there any among them that lacked." — Acts ii. 44, 45; iv. 32, 34, 35, 37.

[18] "Ex quo apparet talem primum Christo credentium fuisse Ecclesiam quales nunc monachi esse nituntur et cupiunt." — *De Vir. Illustr.*, c. 8.

world as if they had not been. Then came persecutions which shortened the way to heaven: these took the place of penitence and trial. The dungeon of the martyr was as good, says Tertullian, as the cell of a prophet.[19] In the intervals of peace which the persecutions left to them, they bound themselves to exercises and penitences which have since terrified our weakness. There were besides a great number among them, whom a desire for perfection led back to the self-abnegation of the earliest days. These devoted themselves to the practice of evangelical precepts by renouncing marriage and property. They condemned themselves to fasts, to silence, to every kind of austerity; such Christians, says Bossuet, were solitary, and changed towns into deserts.[20] Sometimes, indeed, they endeavored to live thus in the midst of the Christian community; but more frequently they fled from the cities, from the noise and commerce of men absorbed in the cares of lucre or of public affairs. Thus, far from all contact with the crowd, and even with the family, they drew near to God and the Divine Mediator, who had so recently shed His blood upon Calvary. Their example was always contagious, and this tradition was never interrupted; each successive generation of Christians furnished recruits to that race, which reproduced itself only in spirit. The name of *Ascetics*[21] and of *Anchorites*,[22] and even that of *Monks*,[23] or solitaries, was bestowed upon them, and when they lived together, their common dwelling was called a *monastery*;[24] it was then a condition and profession admitted in the Church.[25] Virgins and widows, inspired by the love of God, rivalled these venerable men in courage, austerity, and penitence, and, like them, formed themselves into communities. Both were regarded everywhere as the flower of that harvest which the Son of man came to gather on earth.

[19] "Hoc præstat carcer Christiano quod eremus prophetis." — TERTULL., *Ad Martyres.*

[20] *Sermon sur les Obligations de la Vie Religieuse.*

[21] From ἄσκησις, exercise.

[22] From ἀναχωρέω, to put one's self apart, to withdraw.

[23] See above, p. 166.

[24] *Μοναστήριον*, place for living alone; this was the name which was formerly given, according to Dollinger, to the oratories of the Therapeutists.

[25] Dom Bulteau, in book i. of his *Essai de l'Histoire Monastique d'Orient*, Paris, 1680, has collected numerous testimonies taken from the Fathers and Greek chronologies, which prove the perpetuity of the ascetic life during the first centuries of the Church, but he acknowledges that all these authorities are not equally reliable.

Development of monastic life before the peace of the Church.

But the time arrived when this germ was to develop itself with prodigious fertility. This was at the period of the last persecutions and first invasions of the Barbarians, between the reign of Decius and that of Diocletian. All at once the deserts were filled with solitaries, who sought there a refuge from Roman corruption, from the cruelty of the Cæsars, and from the barbarity of the future victors of Rome. And the empire learned that besides the Christians, who, mingled with pagans, formed already the half of the world, there existed immense reserves of men, still more ardently devoted to the new law. The monks appeared. They came at the appointed moment to replace the martyrs and to restrain the Barbarians.

And more than one monk began by claiming his place among the martyrs.[26] There were even nuns whose names are reckoned among those immortal virgins, whose tortures and invincible resistance to pagan lust and cruelty form one of the most heroic pages of the history of the Church. We must quote, at least, one glorious example. During the persecution of Diocletian, there was at Nisibis in Mesopotamia[27] a monastery of fifty virgins. One of them, Febronia, aged twenty-five, was celebrated at once for the marvellous brilliancy of her beauty,[28] the extreme austerity of her life,[29] the depth of her ascetic knowledge, and the eloquent exhortations which the noble matrons of the town came every Friday to hear from her lips. But out of respect for the modesty and reserve of her spiritual daughter, the abbess caused a veil to be held before the seat of the young nun when she spoke, so that she had never been seen from her most tender infancy, not only by any man, but even by any woman of the world.[30] The young widow of a senator, still

[26] Dom Bulteau quotes numerous examples of these (*op. cit.*), but with some reserve, founded on the doubtful worth of the Greek Church calendars.

[27] According to others, at Sibapte, in Syria.

[28] "Quas diligenter in ascetica erudiebat palestra. Hæc formosa admodum et corporis proceritate spectabilis, tanta excellebat venustate vultus, ut floridam speciei talis elegantiam nullus oculus satis possit exprimere. Fama, excellentia doctrinæ, celebrem tota urbe Febroniam redderet."— *Vita et Martyrium S. Febroniæ, auct. Thomaide, teste oculato*, in Greek and Latin, ap. Act. SS. Bollandist., tom. v. Junii, p. 19-25.

[29] She ate only every alternate day, and slept on a plank, a handbreadth and a half broad — "sesquipalmum." — *Ibid.*

[30] "Adolescentula admodum studiosa, facta est multiscia. Sextis feriis, cum in oratorio convenissent sorores, jubebat Bryena ut illis Febronia legeret, quoniam autem matronæ nobiles tali die ad orationem idem confluebant spiritualis doctrinæ gratia, jubebat Bryena velum tendi, post quod lectionem perageret illa." — *Ibid.*, &c., p. 19; compare p. 25.

a pagan, and destined by her family to a second marriage, desired, at any risk, to make acquaintance with this learned and pious nun, and introduced herself into the convent under the disguise of a foreign sister. They passed an entire night in reading the Gospel and conferring upon Christian doctrine, embraced each other and wept together, and the senator's wife left the convent converted to the faith of Christianity, and determined to preserve the chastity of her widowhood. "Who then," said Febronia to the abbess, "was that travelling nun, who wept as if she had never heard the holy Scriptures explained before?" "It was Hieria," answered the abbess — "Hieria, the widow of the senator." "Ah!" said Febronia, "why did you not tell me? for I spoke to her as to a sister."[31] The noble widow became in truth the sister and friend of the nun; she remained with her during a serious illness which confined Febronia to the narrow plank of wood on which she took her repose, and prevented her from fleeing, with the bishop, the clergy, the monks, and most of her companions, when Selenus, the minister of imperial cruelty, charged with the execution of the decrees against the Christians, arrived at Nisibis. Denounced because of her beauty, Febronia was dragged before the tribunal of the persecutor: he asked her if she was free or a slave: she answered, "A slave, and the slave of Christ."[32] Stripped of her garments, and given up to all the tortures which the rage of expiring paganism had invented against Christian weakness and modesty, she endured their insults and torments with a heroic calm. The judge reproached her with making so much account of her beauty that she did not blush at her nudity. "My Christ knows well," said she, "that till this day I have not seen the face of a man. But thou, insensate judge," added the victim, with that boldness which we find in the acts of Agatha, of Agnes, and of Cecilia, "tell me what athlete presents himself at the Olympian games without disrobing himself? and does he not remain naked until he has vanquished his adversary? To work then, that I may strive against thy father the devil, to the

[31] "Post mutua iterum oscula et reciprocas lacrymas: Obsecro te, mater, quænam fuit illa peregrina monacha; in cui Thomais: Ipsa est Hieria senatrix. Ecce enim tanquam sorori locuta sum ei." — *Vita et Martyrium S. Febroniæ*, &c., p. 19; compare p. 25.

[32] "Quidam pessimorum militum cursim accessit ad Selenum, nuntiavitque ei quod inventa sit in monasterio puella formosissima. Dic mihi, adolescentula, cujus, conditionis es, serva an libera? Serva, inquit Febronia. Cujusnam vero? inquit ille. Hæc vero, Christi." — *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 26.

scorn of all thy torments." [33] Her teeth and her tongue were torn from her mouth in succession; her breasts, her feet, and her hands were cut off. The old abbess, who witnessed at a distance the progress of that cruel struggle, uttered great cries, and prayed with a loud voice in the Syrian language that her dear Febronia might resist to the end; the people uttered anathemas on Diocletian and his gods. Hieria addressed public imprecations to the wretch Selenus.[34] Finally the heroic virgin was beheaded. Her blood was the seed not only of Christians, but of the religious. The two nephews of Selenus declared themselves Christians, and embraced monastic life; and the noble Hieria, giving herself and all her possessions to the monastery, deposited her bracelets, her jewels, and all her ornaments, in the coffin of her friend; then throwing herself on her knees before the abbess, "Take me," said she, "I beg of you, my mother — take me for your servant instead of Febronia." [35]

Febronia was henceforward quoted by the bishops of Mesopotamia as the model of nuns. The anniversary of her agony became the great *fête* of the monasteries of that country. Her life was written by a nun who had been an eyewitness of her martyrdom; and tradition records, that at the nightly prayers, the spirit of the holy martyr was seen to reappear in her place in the choir, as if to join her sisters in their devotions.[36]

But Constantine succeeded to Diocletian. The peace of the Church was proclaimed. Such sufferings became rare and exceptional. The martyrs had accomplished their mission: the monks rose up to continue their work. There remained, indeed, under a different form, the same war to wage, the same enemy to vanquish. "The persecution," says Bossuet, "made fewer solitaries than the peace and triumph of

[33] "Impudens, scio quod gloriaris ea, qua polles, pulchritudine, et ideo nec ignominiam reputas nuditatem corporis tui, sed decorum reputas ita te nudam conspici. Novit Christus meus quod usque modo nunquam viri faciem cognoverim. Dic mihi, stulte, et insensate judex, quis in Olympiaco decertaturus agone, luctus aggressus est unquam vestimentis indutus? Eia! quandonam congrediar cum patre tuo diabolo, tua contemnens tormenta?" — *Vita et Martyrium S. Febroniæ*, &c., p. 27.

[34] "Diu sic orans prostravit se humi atque clamabat, *Bra, Bra, Bra*, dialecto Syriaca. Non pauci abibant clamantes anathema Diocletiano et diis ejus." — *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 32.

[35] "Obsecro te, mater mea, suscipe me famulam tuam in locum Febroniæ." — *Ibid.*

[36] "Tales oportet esse monasteriorum præfectas. . . . Apparet S. Febnia in loco suo, . . . psallentum cum sororibus." — *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 35.

the Church. The Christians, who were so simple, and such enemies to luxury, feared a peace which flattered the senses more than they had feared the cruelty of tyrants. The deserts became peopled by innumerable angels who lived in mortal bodies without holding to the earth." [37]

The monks in Egypt.

The most trustworthy judgment accordingly accepts the end of the third century as the period of the regular constitution of the monastic order. Egypt, that antique and mysterious cradle of history, that land already consecrated in the memory of Christians as having been the prison of the people of God and the refuge of the infant Jesus and His mother — Egypt was again chosen to be the cradle of the new world, created by Christian faith and virtue. Monastic life was finally inaugurated there, amid the deserts, by the Pauls, the Anthonys, the Pacomes, and their numerous disciples. These were the founders of that vast empire which has lasted to our own days, the great captains of the permanent warfare of soul against flesh, the heroic and immortal models offered to the religious of all ages. Their miraculous conversions, their poverty, literally evangelical, their labors, their prodigious austerities, and their miracles, have been bequeathed to posterity in immortal lines by the eloquence of St. Athanasius, St. Jerome, and St. Ephrem.

In a book exclusively devoted to the monks of the West, even the merest sketch of the monastic history of the East ought not to be expected. Besides, who has not read the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert?* [38] Who is so ignorant or

[37] Discourse on the Advantages and Duties of the Religious Life. This discourse is attributed by some to Bossuet, by others to Fenelon.

[38] The last version of the precious collection, entitled *Vitæ Patrum, sive Historiæ Eremeticæ, libri* x., published by P. Herbert Rosweyde, Jesuit, at Antwerp, in 1628, is certainly one of the noblest of existing books, and well worthy of the illustrious monk who first conceived the plan of the *Acta Sanctorum*, which his brethren the Bollandistes have carried out. He has collected in this folio all the biographies and authentic notices of the fathers of the desert, dividing them into ten books. The first contains the lives of the principal patriarchs of the Thebaid, written by St. Jerome, St. Athanasius, St. Ephrem, and others; also those of the holy women of the same time — Eugenia, Euphrasia, Thaïs, Pelagia, &c. The second and third are the work of Ruffinus, priest of Aquileia, and companion of St. Melania in her pilgrimage to the East; they comprise biographical notices, less extended but more numerous than those of the first book. The fourth is composed of anecdotes extracted from the *Dialogues* of Sulpicius Severus, and from the *Institutes* and *Collations* of John Cassianus. The fifth, sixth, and seventh books — translations from the Greek by the Roman deacons Pelagius and John Paschasius — contain maxims and examples borrowed from the life of the Fathers, and arranged according to their contents, under the title of various virtues. The eighth, which bears the special name of *Historia Lau-*

unfortunate as not to have devoured these narratives of the heroic age of monasticism? Who has not breathed with delight the perfume of these flowers of solitude? Who has not contemplated, if not with the eyes of faith, at least with the admiration which is inspired by an indisputable grandeur of soul, the struggles of these athletes of penitence, and even the marvellous histories of those lost women who, having in vain essayed to corrupt them, showed themselves worthy of imitating, and capable sometimes even of surpassing them, by prodigies of penitence and sanctity? The reader of these narratives cannot lay them down.[39] Everything is to be found there: variety, pathos, the epic sublimity and simplicity of a race of men artless as infants and strong as giants. They have made the Thebaid an immortal and popular name; they have reduced the enemies of truth to the homage of silence; and, even in our uncertain and debilitated age, they have found eloquent panegyrists among the most celebrated and sincere writers of our day.[40]

St. Anthony, the first abbot.

250-356.

Though we scarcely cast a glance upon that glorious crowd, yet from the midst of it rises a figure so universally renowned, that we must pause to contemplate him. It is Anthony. Young, rich, and noble, at twenty years old he heard that text of the Gospel read in a church, "If thou wouldst be perfect," &c.,

siaca, is a collection addressed to the prefect Lausus by Palladius, afterwards Bishop of Helenopolis in Bithynia, who was in Egypt about 390, and spent three years in visiting the hermits; the narrative of all that he saw and heard there, forms one of the most precious portions of the collection. The ninth, which we owe to Theodoret, bishop of Cyr, is devoted to the holy hermits of Asia. The tenth, which is the work of a Greek monk of the sixth century, Jean Moschus, and bears the special title of *Pratum Spirituale*, or *Paradisus Novus*, is similar. — Of all existing French translations of the *Life of the Fathers*, the best is that of René Gautier, published in the early part of the seventeenth century, and strongly impressed with the charm and energy of the French of that period.

[39] When the literature of our century was in its most degraded condition, under the first empire, it is pleasing to find these words in a letter of the honest and courageous Ducis: "My dear friend, I am reading the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert:* I am dwelling with St. Pacome, founder of the monastery of Tabenne. Truly, there is a charm in transporting one's self to that land of the angels: one would not wish ever to come out of it."

[40] MM. de Chateaubriand, Villemain, St. Marc Girardin, Franz de Champagny, Albert de Broglie. We should add to these names that of the lamented Moehler, the most illustrious of modern German theologians. The second volume of his *Mélanges* contains a *History of the Origin and First Developments of the Monastic Order*, written in 1836. If he had continued this work, which extends only to a hundred pages, and stops at the fifth century, another great work would have been added to Catholic literature, and it would only have remained to us to translate it.

and he applied it to himself. He sold his three hundred acres of rich land,[41] and, giving the price to the poor, plunged into the desert to seek God and His salvation there. There he lived at first alone, in a painful and incessant struggle against the cruel temptations of the devil and the flesh. At length he succeeded in overcoming the sensual ardor of his youth by fasting, macerations, and, above all, by prayer, "that prayer as long as the night," says Bossuet, which absorbed his nights so much as to make him dread the day. "Oh, sun!" he said at one time when that orb flooded him with its light, in the midst of his prayers, "wherefore dost thou rise already, and turn me from contemplating the splendor of the true light?" At thirty-five the battle was gained. In subduing his body, he attained freedom of soul.[42] He crossed the Nile, and went deeper still into the most unknown deserts. There he passed other twenty years in the ruins of an old castle. That long and happy solitude was disturbed by the disciples who gathered round him, by the neighboring hermits who came to ask him the secrets of the knowledge of God. Pilgrims of all nations brought their infirmities to him to be cured, their consciences to be purified. The Neo-Platonic philosophers carried their doubts and objections to him, and found in him the subtile and vigorous defender, ingenious and eloquent, of Redemption.[43] They gathered and established themselves round him; they remained there to imitate and obey him; he became the father and head of all the anchorites of the Thebaid, whom he thus transformed into cenobites.[44] In governing them by his example and instructions, he substituted for an isolated existence the life in common so necessary to break down pride, and to fortify, enlighten, and animate fervor. He guided them at once in the culture of the soul and in the labor of the hands, a double and incessant activity which was henceforward to fill their life. Anthony became the first of the abbots, and, like Abraham, the father of a great people which should have no end.

Founder of cenobitic life.

He issued from the desert only to combat paganism and heresy. He went to Alexandria, at first to encourage the

[41] "Aruræ autem erant ei trecentæ uberes, et valde optimæ." — S. Athan., *Vit. S. Anton.*, c. 2. "The *arura* was a measure of superfices used in Egypt." — V. Rosweyde, *Onomasticon*, p. 1014.

[42] "Tantam animæ libertatem." — S. Athan., *Vit. S. Ant.*, c. 22.

[43] *Ibid.*, c. 44–49.

[44] From κοινὸς, common, and βιόω, to live.

Christians there, and to seek martyrdom for himself during the persecution of Maximin; he returned there
310. at the head of an army of monks, to preach in the public haunts against the Arians, and bear witness to the divinity of Christ. He thus confronted at once two great enemies, pagan corruption and heresy. After having braved the imperial magistrates, dared their soldiers, and refuted their arguments, he well deserved to have for his guest, friend, disciple, and biographer, the immortal Athanasius, the great bishop and eloquent doctor, who, at the cost of so many sufferings, saved the true faith, and secured the triumph of the decrees of Nicæa. The Emperor Constantine and his sons wrote to Anthony humbly as to their father, recommending to him the destinies of the new Rome. He was proclaimed the bulwark of orthodoxy, the light of the world. The very sight of him excited popular enthusiasm everywhere; pagans, and even the priests of the idols, gathered round his path, crying, "Let us see the man of God."[45] But he hastened to return to his Thebaid. "The fish die," said he, "when they are drawn to land, and the monks lose their strength in towns; let us return quickly to our mountains, like fish to the water."[46] He completed his life there in the midst of an always increasing stream of disciples and pilgrims, who received his instructions in the Egyptian language, and who admired even the unalterable beauty of his features, which age did not destroy,[47] and especially his gayety, his joyous and winning affability, infallible sign of a soul which soars into serene regions. He left to his brethren, in a memorable discourse, the narrative of his long battles with the devil, and at the same time the code of virtues and graces which are necessary to the soli-
356. tary life.[48] Finally, he died more than a hundred years old, after having established by his example, and by his immense popularity, the influence and grandeur of the monastic life.

[45] "Precamur ut videamus hominem Dei: quia hoc apud universos conspicuum erat nomen Antonii." — S. Athan., *Vit. S. Ant.*, c. 42.

[46] "Ut pisces ad mare, ita nos ad montem festinemus." — S. Athan., *Vit. S. Ant.*, c. 53.

[47] "Obstupuerunt universi cleri gratiam, quasi nihil temporis exegisset, antiquus membrorum decor perseveravit. Nihil asperum quotidiana cum hostibus bella contulerant. . . . Semper hilarem faciem gerens, jucundus atque affabilis." — *Ibid.*, c. 13, 40.

[48] *Ibid.*, c. 15 to 20.

St. Paul, the first hermit. — About 250.

Near him stands Paul, who had preceded him by twenty years in the desert; Paul, the most illustrious and constant of anchorites, who is considered the founder of that eremetical life which the great Anthony adopted, transformed, and replaced by the cenobitic. Discovered by Anthony in his cavern, in the shade of the palm which furnished him with food and clothing, he offered to him that hospitality which history and poetry have vied [49] in celebrating, and died bequeathing to him that tunic of palm leaves, with which Anthony invested himself, on the solemn days of Easter and Pentecost, as with the armor of a hero dead in the arms of victory.

St. Pacome, author of the first written monastic rule. — 292-348.

Then comes Pacome, younger than St. Anthony by forty years, but dead before him. Born a pagan, a soldier under Constantine before he was a monk, he practised in solitude a discipline a hundred times more austere than that of camps; during fifteen years he never laid down, but slept only standing, supported against a wall, or half-seated upon a stone bench, after days of the hardest labor, as a carpenter, a mason, or a cleanser of pits. He gave to the cenobites, whom Anthony had governed by his oral instruction and example, a written rule complete and minute, the very words of which had been brought to him from heaven by an angel.[50] He founded upon the Nile, at Tabenne,[51] in the higher Thebaid, the first monastery properly so called, or rather a congregation of eight monasteries,[52] each governed by an abbot, but united by a close tie, and placed under the same general superior. These were filled by many thousands of monks; and when Athanasius, already celebrated for his zeal against Arianism, and his glorious struggles with the Emperor Constantius, came from Alexandria and went up the Nile to visit, as far as the higher Thebaid, these numerous communities whose fidelity appeared

[49] St. Jerome, *Vit. S. Pauli;* Chateaubriand, *Les Martyrs*, book xi.

[50] *Vit. S. Pachomii*, c. 21. The text of this rule is to be found in the valuable collection entitled, Lucæ Holstenii. *Vatic. Bibl. Præfect., Codex Regularum Monasticarum et Canonicarum, etc.*, Aug. Vindel., 1769, fol.

[51] Tabenne was in the diocese of Tentyra (Denderah), a little above the first cataract.

[52] Every monastery of Tabenne was divided into several families, according to the manual labor which the monks pursued who composed the family; each family had its prior, and was subdivided into *cells*, containing each three monks. Several of these monasteries were composed of from thirty to forty families, each comprising forty monks: that made more than twelve hundred in each monastery. Others numbered only from two to three hundred. — Moehler, *l. c.*

to him the principal bulwark of orthodoxy, Pacome led an immense army of monks, his own presence among whom he in humility concealed, to meet the stranger, all chanting hymns, and burning with the spirit which should vanquish and bury all the heresies. This was the first review of the new army of the Church.[53]

For his purpose was indeed to train soldiers, or, to speak more truly, athletes tried and invincible. Let us listen to the words which he desired every monk, in the evening, before lying down upon his bed, to address, in the name of his soul, to all the members of his body, apostrophizing them one after another, in order that he might subdue them to be only pledges of obedience to the divine law, and weapons of warfare in the noble service of God.

"While we are still together, obey me, and serve the Lord with me, for the time approaches when you, my hands, shall no longer be able to thrust yourselves forth and seize the goods of others, nor to close yourselves to strike the victim of your wrath; the time when you, my feet, shall be no more able to run in the paths of iniquity. Before death separates us, and while this separation, brought upon us by the sin of the first man, remains unaccomplished, let us fight, let us persevere, let us struggle manfully, let us serve the Lord without torpor or idleness, till the day comes when He will wipe off our terrestrial sweats, and conduct us to an immortal kingdom. Weep, my eyes; and thou, my flesh, accomplish thy noble service: labor with me in prayer, lest the seeking for repose and sleep should end in perpetual torments: be vigilant, sober, laborious, that thou mayest merit the abundance of good things reserved for thee, and that eternity may not echo forever that dismal lamentation of the soul to the body: Alas! alas! why was I ever attached to thee, and why should I suffer, because of thee, an eternal condemnation?" [54]

The two Ammons.

After Pacome, whom all agree to recognize as the first who brought monastic life to rule and order,

[53] "Ingens multitudo fratrum. . . . In monachorum turmis . . . inter monachorum agmina." — *Vit. S. Pachom.*, c. 27.

[54] "Cum vespere pervenitur ad stratum, singulis membris corporis sui dicat. Manibus, . . . veniet tempus . . . quando pugillus administrator iracundiæ non erit. . . . Pedibus, . . . certemus, fortiter, stemus perseveranter, viriliter dimicemus. . . . Fundite lacrymas oculi, demonstra caro nobilem tuam servitutem. . . . Et tunc audietur ululatus animæ deflentis ad corpus: Heu me, quia colligata sum tibi, et propter te pœnam perpetuæ condemnationis excipio." — *Vit. S. Pachomii*, c. 46.

came Ammon, the friend of Anthony's youth, rich, like him, but in addition married. He lived for eighteen years with his wife as a sister, then retired into the desert, and was first to found a community upon the celebrated mountain of Nitria, at the confines of Libya, where more than five thousand monks soon collected to form a sort of religious republic, where they might live in labor and liberty.[55] Among these was another Ammon, called to be the bishop of a neighboring city, who cut off his right ear, in order to escape by that mutilation from the episcopate which would have been forced upon him.[56]

The two Macarii.

As there were two Ammons, there were also two Macarii; one called the *Egyptian*, or the elder, who was first to establish himself in the vast desert of Scete, between Mount Nitria and the Nile; the other called the *Alexandrine*, who, among so many penitents, distinguished himself by the incredible rigor of his austerities. To subdue the rebellion of his flesh, he obliged himself to remain six months in a marsh, and there exposed his body naked to the attacks of the gnats of Africa, whose sting can pierce even the wild boar's hide.[57] He also wrote a system of rules for the use of the solitaries who surrounded him, and whose rigorous abstinence is proved by the fate of a cluster of new grapes offered by a traveller to St. Macarius.[58] Despite his desire to taste them, he gave them to one of his brethren who was at work, and who had also a great wish for them, but who offered them to another, who in his turn passed them to a third. The tempting cluster passed thus from hand to hand till it came back to the hands of Macarius, who gave thanks to God for that universal mortification, and threw the grapes far from him.

These two patriarchs of the western deserts of Egypt lived much together; they were exiled together by the Arians, who feared their zeal for orthodoxy. They crossed the Nile

[55] "In eo habitant ad quinque millia virorum, qui utuntur vario vitæ genere, unusquisque ut potest et vult, adeo ut liceat et solum manere, et cum duobus aut tribus, et cum quo velit numero." — *Hist. Lausiaca*, c. 7. But a severe discipline corrected the abuse of this liberty. There is to be seen in the principal church of Mount Nitria, three whips or scourges to chastise on the spot monks, robbers, and strangers, who shall commit any crime: "Adeo ut quicumque delinquunt et convincuntur, palmam amplectantur et ergo plagas præfinitas accipiant et sic dimittantur." — *Ibid.*

[56] *Ibid.*, c. 12.

[57] "In palude Scetes, in qua possunt culices vel sauciare pelles aprorum." — *Hist. Lausiaca*, c. 20.

[58] "Uvis recentibus perbellisque ad se missis."

together in a ferry-boat, where they encountered two military tribunes, accompanied by a great array of horses with decorated bridles, of equipages, soldiers, and pages covered with ornaments. The officers looked long at the two monks in their old dresses humbly seated in a corner of the bark. They might well look at them, for in that bark two worlds stood face to face: old Rome degraded by the emperors, and the new Christian republic, of which the monks were the precursors. As they approached the shore, one of the tribunes said to the cenobites, "You are happy, for you despise the world." "It is true," answered the Alexandrine, "we despise the world, whilst the world despises you; and you have spoken more truly than you intended; we are happy in fact and in name, for we are called Macarius, that is to say, happy (*μακάριος*)." The tribune made no answer; but, returning to his house, he renounced all his wealth and rank, and went to seek happiness in solitude.[59]

The Thebaid and its innumerable monastic population.

Thus the two Thebaids and all the deserts of Egypt were peopled. We see them at the end of the fourth century full of monks and monasteries, united among themselves from that period, like the modern orders and congregations, by a common discipline, by reciprocal visits, and general assemblies.

Nothing in the wonderful history of these hermits of Egypt is so incredible as their number. But the most weighty authorities agreed in establishing it.[60] It was a kind of emigration of towns to the desert, of civilization to simplicity, of noise to silence, of corruption to innocence. The current once begun, floods of men, of women, and of children threw themselves into it, and flowed thither during a century with irresistible force. Let us quote some figures. Pacome, who died at fifty-six, reckoned three thousand monks under his rule; his monasteries of Tabenne soon included seven thousand, and St. Jerome affirms that as many as fifty thousand were present at the annual gathering of the general congregation of monasteries which followed his rule.[61]

There were, as we have just said, five thousand on the mountain of Nitria alone. Nothing was more frequent than to see two hundred, three hundred, or five hundred monks

[59] "Accidit ut maximum pontonem ingrederentur. . . . Duo tribuni cum magno fastu et apparatu . . . rhedam totam æneam . . . pueros torquibus et aureis zonis ornatos. . . . Beati estis vos qui mundum illuditis. . . . Nos autem mundum illusimus, vos autem illusit mundus." — *Hist. Lausiaca*, *loc. cit.*

[60] S. Augustin, *De Morib. Eccles.*, i. 31.

[61] *Præf. in Regul. S. Pachom.*, ap. Holstein, i. 25.

under the same abbot. Near Arsinoe (now Suez), the abbot Serapion governed ten thousand, who in the harvest-time spread themselves over the country to cut the corn, and thus gained the means of living and giving alms.[62] It has even been asserted that there were in Egypt as many monks in the deserts as inhabitants in the towns.[63] The towns themselves were, so to speak, inundated by them, since in 356 a traveller found in a single town of Oxyrynchus[64] upon the Nile, ten thousand monks and twenty thousand virgins consecrated to God.[65]

The immense majority of these religious were cenobites — that is to say, they lived in the same enclosure, and were united by common rule and practice under an elected head, whom they everywhere called abbot, from the Syriac word *abba*, which means *father*. The cenobitical life superseded, rapidly and almost completely, the life of anchorites. Many anchorites, to make their salvation more sure, returned into social monastic life. Scarcely any man became an anchorite until after having been a cenobite, and in order to meditate before God during the last years of his life.[66] Custom has therefore given the title of monks to cenobites alone.

The cenobites and their manner of life.

Ambitious at once of reducing to subjection their rebellious flesh, and of penetrating the secrets of the celestial light, these cenobites from that time united active with contemplative life. The various and incessant labors which filled up their days are known. In the great frescoes of the Campo-Santo at Pisa, where some of the fathers of Christain art, Orcagna, Laurati, Benozzo Gozzoli, have set before us the life of the fathers of the desert in lions so grand and pure, they appear in their coarse black or brown dresses, a cowl upon their heads, sometimes a mantle of goatskin upon their shoulders, occupied in digging up the soil, in cutting down trees, in fishing in the Nile, in milking the goats, in gathering the dates which served them for food, in plaiting the mats on which they were to die. Others are absorbed in reading or meditating on the Holy Scriptures. Thus a saint has said, the cells united in the desert were like

[62] Ruffin., *De Vit. Patr.*, lib. ii. c. 18.
[63] *Ibid.*, ii. 7.
[64] Now *Abou-Girge*, according to the map of Father Sicard.
[65] Ruffin., ii. 5.
[66] "A new convert having shut himself up in an absolute solitude immediately after having assumed the monastic dress, the elders of the place (*vicini seniores*) forced him to come out of it, and sent him to do penance in all the neighboring cells." — *De Vit. Patr.*, lib. v. c. 10, n. 110.

a hive of bees. There each had in his hands the wax of labor, and in his mouth the honey of psalms and prayers.[67] The days were divided between prayer and work. The work was divided between field-labor and the exercise of various trades, especially the manufacture of those mats which are still so universally used in southern countries. There were also among these monks entire families of weavers, of carpenters, of curriers, of tailors, and of fullers:[68] among all, the labor was doubled by the rigor of an almost continual fast. All the rules of the patriarchs of the desert made labor obligatory, and the example of these holy lives gave authority to the rule. No exception to the contrary can be quoted, or has been discovered. The superiors were first in hardship. When the elder Macarius came to visit the great Anthony, they immediately set to work at their mats together, conferring thus upon things important to souls; and Anthony was so edified by the zeal of his guest that he kissed his hands, saying, "What virtues proceed from these hands!"[69]

Their charity.

Each monastery was then a great school of labor, and at the same time a great school of charity.[70] They practised this charity not only among themselves, and with regard to the poor inhabitants of the neighboring countries, but especially in the case of travellers whom the necessities of commerce or public business called to the banks of the Nile, and of the numerous pilgrims whom their increasing fame drew to the desert. A more generous hospitality had never been exercised, nor had the universal mercy introduced by Christianity into the world blossomed anywhere to such an extent.[71] A thousand incidents in their history reveal the most tender solicitude for the miseries of the poor. Their extraordinary fasts, their cruel macerations, that heroic penitence which was the heart of their life, did not destroy their perception of the weakness and necessities of others. On the contrary, they had learned the secret principle of the love of their

[67] Epiphan., lib. iii. *Hær.* 80 *contra Massalianos*, ap. Rosweyd.

[68] S. Hieron., *Præf. in Reg. S. Pachomii*, § 6. Compare *Hist. Lausiaca*, c. 39.

[69] "Sedentes a sero et colloquentes de utilitate animarum. Multa virtus de istis egreditur." — Rosweyde, *De Vit. Patrum*, p. 585. Compare S. Hieron., *in Vit. S. Hilarion.*

[70] Champagny, *loc. cit.*

[71] "Nusquam sic vidimus florere charitatem, nusquam sic opus servare misericordiæ et studium hospitalitatis impleri." — Ruffin., *De Vit. Patr.*, lib. ii. c. 21.

neighbor in that daily struggle against the sensual ardor of their youth, against the perpetually-renewed rebellion of the flesh, against the recollections and temptations of the world. The *Xenodochium* — that is, the asylum of the poor and strangers — formed from that time a necessary appendix to every monastery. The most ingenious combinations, and the most gracious inspirations of charity, are to be found in their history. A certain monastery served as a hospital to sick children, and thus anticipated one of the most touching creations of modern benevolence ;[72] and another was transformed by its founder, who had been a lapidary in his youth, into a hospital for lepers and cripples. "Behold," said he, in showing to the ladies of Alexandria the upper floor, which was reserved for women — "Behold my jacinths ;" then, in conducting them to the floor below, where the men were placed — "See my emeralds."[73]

They were hard only upon themselves. They exercised this hardness with that imperturbable confidence which gives the victory ; and this victory they won, complete and immortal, in the most unfavorable conditions. Under a burning sky, in a climate which has always seemed the cause or the excuse of vice, in a country given up at all times to every kind of laxness and depravity, there were thousands of men who, during two centuries, interdicted themselves from the very shadow of a sensual gratification, and made of the most rigorous mortification a rule as universal as a second nature.[74]

To labors simply manual, to the most austere exercises of penitence, and the cares of hospitality and charity, they united the culture of the mind and the study of sacred literature. There were at Tabenne a special family of *literati* who knew Greek. The rule of St. Pacome made the reading of divers portions of the Bible a strict obligation. All the monks, besides, were required to be able to read and write. To qualify themselves for reading the Scriptures was the first duty imposed upon the novices.[75]

Amongst them were many learned men and philosophers, trained in the ancient knowledge of the schools of Alexandria, and who must have carried to the desert a treasure of

[72] Rosweyde, p. 357.

[73] "Erat autem is a juventute lapidarius, . . . quid vis primum videre hyacinthos an smaragdos? . . . Ecce hyacinthi . . . Ecce smaragdi." — *Hist. Lausiaca*, c. 6.

[74] Balmes, *Du Protestantisme Comparé au Catholicisme*, t. ii. c. 39.

[75] "Omnino nullus erit in monasterio qui non discat litteras et de Scripturis aliquid teneat."

varied learning. Solitude instructed them how to purify their gifts in the crucible of faith. It doubled the strength of their mind. The new science, theology, found scholars nowhere more profound, deeply convinced, and eloquent.[76] They therefore feared no discussion with their old companions of study or of pleasure; and when they had refuted and confounded the heretical sophists, they opened their arms and their hearts with joy to receive the bishops and orthodox confessors who came to seek a shelter with them.

Athanasius in the desert. — 350-372.

It is not, then, wonderful if the hero of those great conflicts of faith against tyranny and heresy, the great Athanasius, wandering from trial to trial, and from exile to exile, especially loved to seek an asylum in the cells of the cenobites of the Thebaid, to share their studies and their austerities, to collect the narrative of their struggle with the flesh and the devil, and to renew his courage and his soul in the refreshing waves of monastic prayer and penitence. He had always counted upon the sympathy of the monks, and always seconded with all his might the progress of their order. He could then regard himself as at home among "those houses vowed to prayer and silence, rising from stage to stage along the Nile, the last of which lose themselves in solitude, like the source of the stream."[77] In vain his persecutors searched for him there; at the first signal of their approach he passed unperceived from one monastery to another, and there took up the course of life of an ordinary monk, as assiduous as any in the offices and regular labor. He ended always by taking refuge in an unknown cavern to which one faithful person alone knew the road. His retirement in the desert lasted six years. His genius could but increase there, his eloquence took a more masculine and incisive character. It was from thence that he wrote to the bishops of Egypt to enlighten them, to his church in Alexandria to console it, and to the persecutors and heretics to confound them. It was to his hosts of the

[76] "Scripturarum vero divinarum meditationis et intellectus atque scientiæ divinæ nusquam tanta vidimus exercitia, ut singulos pene eorum oratores credas in divina esse sapientia." — Ruffin., *ubi supra*.

[77] Albert de Broglie, *L'Eglise et l'Empire Romain au* IV^e^ *Siècle*, t. iii. p. 331. — If it had entered into our plan to enlarge upon this episode of Athanasius in the desert, we should have given it up, believing that all our readers have certainly read the excellent narrative of the Prince de Broglie, who has treated in a masterly manner all that concerns the career of this great man. The animosity of the criticism to which his admirable work has been subjected will excite the indignation of all right-thinking minds; but full justice will be done to him in reading it.

Thebaid, as to the witnesses and soldiers of orthodoxy, that he addressed the famous *Epistle to the Solitaries*, which contains so dramatic and complete a narration of the Arian persecution under Constantius. It is entitled, "To all those who lead, no matter where, the monastic life, and who, strengthened in faith, have said, 'Behold we have forsaken all and followed thee.'"[78] In this he sets forth an apologetic account of his life and doctrines, he relates his sufferings and those of the faithful, he proclaims and justifies the divinity of the Word, he stigmatizes the courtier bishops of Cæsar, docile instruments of those vile eunuchs who disposed of the empire and the Church as masters; he accuses the Emperor Constantius of having deprived all the churches of freedom, and of having filled everything with hypocrisy and impiety; he claims for truth the noble privilege of conquering by freedom, and throws back upon error and falsehood the necessity of taking constraint and persecution for their weapons. Let us quote his noble words, immortally true, and always in season — "If it is disgraceful for some bishops to have changed in fear, it is still more disgraceful to have done violence to them, and nothing marks more clearly the weakness of an evil cause. The devil, who has no truth, comes with axe and hatchet to break down the doors of those who receive him; but the Saviour is so gentle that he contents himself with teaching, and when he comes to each of us, he does no violence, but he knocks at the door and says, Open to me, my sister, my spouse. If we open to him he enters; if we will not, he withdraws; for truth is not preached with swords or arrows, nor by soldiers, but by counsel and persuasion. It belongs to the true religion never to constrain, but to persuade."[79]

Inspired by such teachings and by such an example, the monks, when the satellites of the persecutors pursued the orthodox confessors even into the desert, scorned to answer

[78] "Omnibus ubique monasticam vitam agentibus, et fide firmatis, et dicentibus, Ecce nos reliquimus omnia et secuti sumus te."

[79] "Hominum suæ sententiæ diffidentium est vim inferre ac invitos cogere. Sic diabolus, cum nihil veri habeat, in securi et ascia irruens confringit portas eorum qui se recipiunt: Salvator autem ea est mansuetudine, ut his verbis doceat quidem: 'Si quis vult post me venire;' et, 'Qui vult meus esse discipulus.' Sed ubi quempiam aderit, nullam inferat vim, sed potius pulsando hæc loquatur: 'Aperi mihi, soror mea, sponsa.' Tunc, si aperiant, ingreditur; sin negligant abnuantque, secedit. Non enim gladiis aut telis, non militum manu, veritas prædicatur, sed suasione et consilio. Religionis proprium est non cogere, sed persuadere." — S. Athanas., *Ad Solitarios*, ed. Bened., pp. 363, 368.

them, presented their throats to the sword, and suffered tortures and death with joy, holding it more meritorious to suffer for the defence of their legitimate pastors, than to fast, or to practise any other austerity.[80] They themselves went forth, when it was necessary, from their Thebaid, to go to Alexandria, to snatch their last victims from the last persecutors, and confound by their courage, by their abrupt and penetrating language, and even by their presence alone, the most widely spread and dreaded of heresies.

But, however great and strong their influence might be in polemics, and in the midst of a population agitated by these struggles, it was more powerful still in their proper sphere in that solitude to which they always returned like Anthony, their model and master, with so much alacrity and joy.

Evening prayer in the desert.

It was in the desert especially that their triumph shone, and that the world, scarcely yet Christian, recognized in them the envoys of heaven and the conquerors of the flesh. When towards evening, at the hour of vespers, after a day of stifling heat, all work ceased, and from the midst of the sands, from the depths of caverns, from hypogeums, from pagan temples cleared of their idols, and from all the vast tombs of a people dead, the cry of a living people rose to heaven; when everywhere and all at once the air echoed the hymns, the prayers, the songs pious and solemn, tender and joyous, of these champions of the soul and conquerors of the desert, who celebrated in the language of David the praises of the living God, the thanksgivings of the freed soul, and the homage of vanquished nature, — then the traveller, the pilgrim, and especially the new convert, stood still, lost in emotion, and, transported with the sounds of that sublime concert, cried aloud, "Behold, this is Paradise!"[81]

"Go," said the most eloquent doctor of the Church at that period — "go to the Thebaid; you shall find there a solitude still more beautiful than Paradise, a thousand choirs of angels under the human form, nations of martyrs, armies of virgins, the diabolical tyrant chained, and Christ triumphant and glorified."[82]

[80] S. Athanas., Ep. 2, *ap. Oper. Luciferi Cagliar.*

[81] "Circa horam itidem nonam licet stare et audire in unoquoque monasterio hymnos et psalmos Christo canentes . . . adeo ut existimet quispiam se sublime elatum transmigrasse in paridisum deliciarum." — Pallad., *Hist. Lausiaca*, c. 7.

[82] S. Joan. Chrysost., *in Matth.*, hom. viii.

Monastic life among women.

The holy doctor spoke of armies of virgins, because in all times Christian women had shown themselves, both in number and zeal, the emulators of men in the practice of monastic virtues and austerities. Virginity had been honored and practised in the Church from its origin.[83] Besides the sublime maids who bore it triumphant through the last agonies, there were a multitude who preserved it for many years in the midst of the world. For there were nuns, as there had been ascetics and hermits, before the regular and popular institution of monastic life. With all the more reason, when the towns and deserts of Egypt became populated with monasteries, the sex whose weakness Christianity had ennobled and purified, came there to claim its part. The most illustrious fathers of the desert found each in his own family a woman eager to comprehend and imitate him. The sisters of Anthony and Pacome, the mother of Theodore, the wife of Ammon, followed them into the desert, either to lead them back, or watch over them. These hearts, steeled by an immortal love, repelled them with unyielding resolution; then the sorrowing Christian women avenged themselves by embracing the same kind of life which raised their fears for their brothers. They established themselves in an enclosure, distinct but near, sometimes separated by a river or by a precipice from those whom they had followed. It was impossible to refuse to them counsels, rules, and precepts which they observed with an ardent fidelity; and soon a multitude crowded into these sanctuaries to practise fasting, silence, austerities, and works of mercy.

There dwelt first, and above all, the heroic virgins who brought to that shelter their innocence, their attractions, and their love of heaven. Of these all ranks and all countries furnished their contingent by thousands. They hesitated at no sacrifice to procure an entrance there, nor before any trial to be permitted to remain.

Alexandra.

Here, it was the slave Alexandra who, fearing her own beauty, and in pity for the poor soul of him who loved her, buried herself alive in an empty tomb, and remained ten years without permitting any one to see her face.[84]

[83] See, among other proofs, S. Cyprian. Martyr., *Tract. de Habitu Virginum*, where he speaks of those who "se Christo dicaverunt, se Deo voverunt."

[84] "Quidam insano mei amore tenebatur, et, ne eum viderer molestia afficere . . . malui me vivam in hoc monumentum inferre, quam offendere animam quæ facta est ad Dei imaginem." — *De Vit. Patr.*, lib. viii. c. 5.

Euphrosyne. There, it was the beautiful and learned Euphrosyne, who, at eighteen, deserted her father and her husband; and, to escape the better from their search, obtained admission, by concealing her sex, into a monastery of monks, where she remained thirty-eight years without leaving her cell. Her father, in despair, after useless search by land and sea, came to the same monastery to seek some comfort to his increasing grief. "My father," he said to the first monk whom he met, "pray for me; I can bear up no longer, so much do I weep for my lost daughter, so much am I devoured by this grief!" And it was to herself he spoke, to his daughter, whom he did not recognize in the monk's dress. At sight of the father from whom she had fled, and whom she too well recognized, she grew pale and wept. But soon, smothering her tears, she consoled him, cheered him up, promised that he should one day see his daughter again, and thus encouraged him for his further life; then finally, when she felt herself dying, she sent for him to her bedside, revealed the secret of her sacrifice, and bequeathed to him her example and her cell, where her father, so long inconsolable, came to live and die in his turn.[85]

Magdalenes. But more strange recruits for these sanctuaries of virginity were the celebrated courtesans, the dancers, the mercenary and imperious beauties whom Egypt, and especially Alexandria, seemed then to produce in greater number and more perfidious and undaunted than elsewhere, as if to subject Christian virtue to a war still more dangerous than the persecution out of which it had come. Men and demons excited them violently against the solitaries. It was not enough for these female conquerors to seduce, to dazzle, and to govern the profane lay crowd of their adorers of every age and condition; they longed to vanquish and enchain the strong and pure men who believed themselves safe in the shelter of their retreats. Their pride could not be satisfied without this triumph. They hastened into the desert; they knocked at the doors of the cells, they displayed to the eyes of the suppliant and dismayed solitaries those attractions which had been too often found irresistible, and that pomp with which

[85] "Ora pro me, pater, quia non possum sufferre dolorem de filia mea, sed magis ac magis de die in diem . . . crescit vulnus meum. Ut autem non agnosceretur per multa colloquia, dixit ad Paphnutium: Vale, Domine mi, . . . et anima illius compatiebatur illi, facies ejus pallebat et replebatur lacrymis." — Rosweyde, p. 366. The history of St. Eugenia, which immediately precedes that of St. Euphrosyne, has very great beauties, but also so many chronological difficulties, that I could not avail myself of it.

the East has always adorned voluptuousness; they employed in that effort all the audacity, the address, and the charms which they possessed, and yet almost always they were overcome. They returned vanquished to Alexandria, and went to hide their defeat in a monastery; or they remained in solitude to throw themselves, after the example of their victors, into the depths of repentance and divine love.

The first place in the sacred annals of the desert seems to belong to those true martyrs of penitence, those glorious rivals of the Magdalene, the first friend of Christ, to Mary of Egypt, to Thais, to Pelagia, the celebrated actress of Antioch, to all those saints to whom the worship of the Christian nations has so long remained faithful. The saints who have written the lives of the Fathers have related the history of these courtesans, as they are called, with a bold simplicity which I should not venture to reproduce. A burning breath seems to pass across the narrative, which for an instant inflames their imagination, and is then extinguished in the pure and serene atmosphere of Christian chastity. "We were," says one of them, "seated at the feet of our bishop, that austere and vigorous monk, from the monastery of Tabenne. We were listening to and admiring his holy and salutary instructions; suddenly there appeared before us the first of the *mimes*, the most beautiful of the dancers of Antioch, all covered with jewels; her naked limbs were concealed under pearls and gold; she had her head and her shoulders bare. A great retinue accompanied her. The men of the world were never tired of devouring her charms with their eyes; a delicious perfume exhaled from all her person and sweetened the air we breathed. When she had passed, our father, who had longed gazed at her, said to us, 'Have you not been charmed with so much beauty?' And we were all silent. 'For me,' resumed the bishop, 'I took great pleasure in it, for God has destined her to judge us, one day. . . . I see her,' he said later, 'like a dove all black and stained; but that dove shall be bathed in the waters of baptism, and shall fly towards heaven white as snow.' Shortly, in fact, she returned to be exorcised and baptized. 'I am called Pelagia, she said, 'the name which my parents gave me; but the people of Antioch call me the *Pearl*, because of the quantity of ornaments with which my sins have adorned me.' Two days after, she gave all her goods to the poor, clothed herself in haircloth, and went to shut herself up in a cell on the Mount of Olives. Four years later, he who had

The dancer Pelagia.

admired her incomparable beauty so much, found her in that cell and did not recognize her, so much had penitence and fasting changed her. Her great eyes were hollow and sunken as in wells. She died thus. Such was," says the narrator, "the life of that courtesan, of that hopeless one. God grant that we may find mercy like her at the day of judgment!" [86]

A different narrative, a type of innocent vocations, and the first detailed and authentic example of those contests between the cloister and the family, which have been renewed during so many centuries for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, is, however, more worthy of being quoted from these precious annals.

Euphrasia. Euphrasia was the only daughter of a senator, nearly related to the Emperor Theodosius; her father having died while she was still a child, she was betrothed to a wealthy noble, and in the interval, before she came to marriageable years, her mother took her to Constantinople and Egypt, to visit the immense estates which they possessed there, and which extended into the higher Thebaid. They often lodged in a monastery of nuns of extreme austerity, and both conceived a great regard for these virgins, whose prayers for the soul of her husband and the future of her daughter the young widow incessantly craved. One day the abbess said to the little Euphrasia, "Do you love our house and our sisters?" "Yes," unswered the child, "I love you." "But which do you love best, your betrothed or us?" "I do not know him any more than he knows me; I know you and love you; but you, which do you love best, your betrothed or me?" The abbess and the other nuns who were there answered, "We love thee, thee and our Christ." "Ah," said the child, "I also love you, you and your Christ." However, the mother, who had been present during this conversation, began to lament and weep, and would have led her daughter away. The abbess said to her, "You must go away, for those only who are vowed to Christ remain here." The child answered, "Where is He, this Christ?" The

[86] "Vir mirificus et efficacissimus monachus. . . . Ecce subito transiit per nos prima mimarum Antiochiæ, . . . prima choreutriarum pantomimarum. . . . Pulchritudinis autem decoris ejus non erat satietas omnibus secularibus hominibus. . . . Non delectati estis tanta pulchritudine ejus? . . . Naturali nomine Pelagia vocata sum, . . . cives vero Antiochiæ Margaritam me vocant, propter pondus ornamentorum quibus me adornaverunt peccata mea. Ego vero non cognovi eam . . . quam antea videram inæstimabili pulchritudine. . . . Oculi ejus sicut fossæ." — Jacob Diac., *Vit. S. Pelag.*, c. 2, 8, 14.

abbess showed her an image of the Saviour. She threw herself upon it, kissed it, and immediately said, "Well! I devote myself truly to my Christ; I shall go away no more with my mother, I will remain with you." The mother tried in vain with many caresses to induce her child to go with her; the abbess joined her persuasions to those of the mother. "If you remain here," she said, "you will have to learn the holy books and all the psalter, and fast every day till evening as the other sisters do." "I learn already to do all that," answered the girl, "only let me remain here." Then the abbess said to the mother, "Madame, she must be left to us; the grace of God shines on her; the virtue of her father and the prayers of both will procure her eternal life." The mother, conducting her daughter before the image of Christ, exclaimed, weeping, "Lord Jesus Christ, be gracious to this dear little girl, who seeks Thee, and who has given herself to Thee." She was then clothed in the monastic dress. Her mother said to her, "Lovest thou that dress?" "Yes, certainly, my mother; for I have learned that it is the robe of betrothal which the Lord gives to those who love him." "May thy bridegroom then render thee worthy of him!" [87]

These were the last words of the desolate mother, who embraced her daughter and went away beating her breast. She died soon after, leaving the young Euphrasia sole heir of a double and immense patrimony. At the solicitation of the nobleman who was to have married her, the emperor wrote to her to return to Constantinople. She answered him that she had already a bridegroom, and supplicated him, in the name of the close friendship which had united him to her father, to dispose of all her fortune for the advantage of the poor, of orphans, and of churches, to free and portion her slaves, to remit all their taxes to the cultivators of her paternal domains, and, finally, to intercede for her with the empress. In reading the letter, the empress said to her husband, "Truly this girl is of imperial race." The will of the young heiress was executed. She remained divested of everything in her Egyptian monastery; she lived there from

[87] "Filia mea, habemus in Ægypto copiosam magnamque substantiam. . . . Neque illum novi, neque ille me: vos autem novi et vos amo. . . . Ego vero et vos deligo, et Christum meum. . . . Vere et ego me voveo Christo meo, et ulterius cum domina mea matre non vado. . . . Ubi vos manetis et ego maneo. . . . Litteras habes discere et psalterium, sicut universæ sorores. . . . Ego et jejunium et omnia disco. . . . Cui desponsata es, ipse faciat te thalamo suo dignam. . . . Et deflens pectusque suum tundens." — *De Vitis Patrum*, i. 352.

the age of twelve to thirty, occupied with the hardest labors, cleaning out the chambers of the sisters, carrying wood and water to the kitchen, and even stones for the buildings, baking the bread in the great oven of the community, and attending to the sick children and the poor idiots who were brought to the nuns, as to the source of all remedies. All these merits did not preserve her from the trials, assaults, and calumnies which are the portion of the saints, and which pursued her even up to the day when she was laid in the tomb, where her mother awaited her coming.[88]

Let us haste to close the volume which contains these too-absorbing tales, and pursue our rapid course across the first ages of monastic glory, which the following ages only extended and increased.

The monks at Sinai.

Meantime, Egypt being speedily occupied, the stream of monastic life overflowed and inundated the neighboring countries. The monks passed on to people the burning deserts of Arabia, Syria, and Palestine. Sinai was occupied by them almost as soon as the Thebaid. At the commencement of the fourth century, while the last pagan emperors were exhausting their rage against Christians throughout all the empire, the Arabs — who did not recognize their laws, but whom the instinct of evil associated with them in their war against Christ — murdered forty solitaries who had fixed their sojourn upon the holy mountain where God gave His law to Moses. Others came to replace them, and there came also other Arabs or Saracens to sacrifice their successors, and these alternations between the pacific colonization of the monks and the bloody incursions of the Saracens, were prolonged during the rest of the century. But the destroyers tired sooner than the monks, and ended by becoming converts, a portion of them at least. St. Nilus was the principal apostle of these savage tribes, and the great monastic colonizer of Mount Sinai.

And in Palestine.

In Palestine monastic life was introduced by Hilarion. This young pagan, born at Gaza, having gone to study at Alexandria, where he was converted to Christianity, was drawn by the renown of Anthony into the

[88] "Quapropter imperator Domine, non ulterius vos ille vir fatiget. . . . Novi quia recordaberis parentum meorum, maxime patris mei. Audivi enim quia in palatio nunquam a te dividebatur. Omnes constitutos sub jugo servitutis manumitte et eis legitima concede. Manda actoribus patris mei ut omne debitum dimittant agricolis, quod a die patris mei usque ad hanc diem reddebant. . . . Vere, Domine imperator, filia est Antigoni et Euphrasiæ genus tuum, et ex sanguine ejus est hæc puella." — *De Vitis Patrum*, i. 355.

desert. "Thou art welcome," said Anthony, seeing him approach his mountain — "thou art welcome, thou who shinest early as the star of morning." The young Syrian answered him, "Peace be with thee, thou column of light which sustains the universe;"[89] He passed two months with the patriarch of the cenobites, made up his mind to be a monk like Anthony, and to imitate him returned to his own country, where nothing of the kind had yet been seen. After having given all his goods to the poor, he established himself at sixteen upon the side of a mountain in a cabin of rushes, near a cistern which he had dug with his own hands, and which served to water the garden which produced his food. There he delved, sang, prayed, fasted, plaited baskets, and, above all, strove against the temptations of the devil. In vain the recollections of the beautiful women of Alexandria, of the sumptuous repasts, and all the seductions of the pagan world, came to arouse his senses. He undertook to reduce his body, like a beast of burden, by hunger and thirst, and succeeded thus in subduing his passions.[90] He passed twenty-two years in solitude; but that austere virtue in so young a man, and the miraculous cures obtained by his prayers, gradually extended his fame throughout all Syria; that fame attracted the crowd; that crowd gave him disciples and emulators; to receive them he had to form communities: and there is no doubt that the foundation of the monasteries which have risen from that time at Jerusalem and Bethlehem,[91] as if to approach the new institution to the places consecrated forever by the Nativity and Passion of its divine model, date back to his labors. He had the honor of undergoing persecution under Julian the Apostate, and of being proscribed at the desire of his own compatriots of Gaza. But that trial was short, and it was much less proscription than the desire to escape his too great fame which conducted him into the Mediterranean isles, into Sicily, the

St. Hilarion. 202-372.

[89] "Bene venisti, Lucifer, qui mane oriris. . . . Pax tibi, columna lucis, quæ sustines orbem universum." — *Vitæ Patrum*, iv. § xvii. c. 4.

[90] "Nec quisquam monachum ante S. Hilarionem in Syria noverat. Orans et psallens et rostro humum fodiens, ut jejuniorum laborem labor operis duplicaret; simulque fiscellas junco texens." — S. Hieron., *Vit. S. Hilarion.*, c. 9-3. "Quoties illi nudæ mulieres cubitanti, quoties esurienti largissimæ apparuere dapes. . . . Ego te, aselle, faciam ut non calcitres, nec te hordeo alam, sed palcis; fame te conficiam et siti, gravi onerabo pondere, per æstus indagabo et frigora, ut cibum potius quam lasciviam cogites." — *Ibid.*

[91] Bulteau, *Histoire Monastique d'Orient*, pp. 239, 268, 270.

Cyclades, and even into the isle of Cyprus. From country to country, and even beyond the sea, he fled from the fame of his virtues and miracles which pursued him.[92]

The monks in the isle of Cyprus.

The island of Cyprus, so celebrated by the worship of Venus, and the associations of which made it the sanctuary of pagan sensualism, had the singular grace of being purified by a ray of monastic light, before becoming the last asylum of that Catholic royalty which the Crusades were to inaugurate near the tomb of Jesus Christ. Nothing can better depict the victory of the divine Son of the Virgin over the goddess mother of Love, than the sojourn of Hilarion at Paphos. The austere monk, whose youth had been but one long and triumphant struggle against voluptuousness, remained two years at the gates of that town, so dear to erotic poetry, whilst the Christians of the island crowded round him, and brought the possessed to him to be healed. He afterwards found a retreat more solitary, near the ruin of an ancient temple, doubtless consecrated to Venus, where he heard night and day the bellowing voices of a whole army of demons, impatient of the yoke which the soldier of chastity and prayer came to impose upon their ancient subjects. These nocturnal clamors rejoiced him greatly, for he loved, he said, to see his enemies face to face.[93]

There he died, an octogenarian, epitomizing his life in these well-known words — "Go forth, then, my soul, go forth: what hast thou to fear? For nearly threescore and ten years thou hast served Christ, and dost thou fear to die?"[94]

Even to this day the Cypriote people, confusing in their recollections the legends of good and evil, the victories of the soul and the triumphs of sense, give to the ruins of one of the strong castles built by the Lusignans, which command their island, the double name of Castle of St. Hilarion and the *Castle of the God of love.*

St. Epiphanius.

Hilarion left upon the metropolitan see of the island, sanctified from henceforth by his presence

[92] Fénelon; Albert de Broglie, *L'Eglise et L'Empire*, iv. 273.

[93] "Ingressus Paphum, urbem Cypri, nobilem carminibus poetarum. . . . Antiquissimi templi ruina ex quo (ut ipse referebat et ejus discipuli testantur) tam innumerabilium per noctes et dies dæmonum voces resonabant, ut exercitum crederes. Quo ille valde delectatus, quod scilicet antagonistas haberet in proximo." — S. Hieron., *Vit. S. Hilarion.*, i. c. 35, 36.

[94] "Egredere: quid times? Egredere: anima mea, quid dubitas? Septuaginta prope annis servisti Christo, et mortem times?" — S. Hieron., *Vit. S. Hilarion.*, i. c. 35, 36.

and memory, an illustrious monk, St. Epiphanius, who had been his disciple, and who had come to rejoin him at Paphos. A Jew by origin — converted in his youth by seeing the charity of a monk, who divested himself of his own garment to clothe a poor man — Epiphanius himself became a monk, and had acquired great fame for his austerity, in Palestine first, where Hilarion had trained him, and afterwards in Egypt, where he lived during the persecution of Julian, and where Christianity kept its ground better than in the other quarters of the East, thanks to the authority of Athanasius and the influence of the Thebaid. Raised in spite of himself to the episcopate, he continued to wear the dress of a hermit, and it was at the request of the superiors of two Syrian monasteries that he wrote the history and refutation of the eighty heresies then known. He was 365. the friend of St. Basil, St. Jerome, and St. Chrysostom. He knew Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, and Latin, equally well: he always devoted this knowledge to the defence of orthodoxy in faith and discipline, which he served by his works not less than by his journeys to Rome, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. He was born in a cool valley, at the foot of Mount Olympus, and not far from Cape *Pifani*, which still retains the trace of his name in that alteration made by European sailors of the word *Epiphanios*.[95]

The monks under Julian.

The Emperor Julian, whose mind was greater than his heart, was not unaware of the grandeur of the monastic institution, and, even in persecuting the monks, dreamt of male and female convents for his regenerated pagans. It was desiring the resuscitation of a corpse. The work of God needed no emperor: the saints were sufficient for it. The monastic life which they produced, and in which they perfected their title to heaven, propagated itself rapidly, and thanks to this, the conversion of the East to Christianity was being accomplished. At Edessa in the centre of Mesopotamia, St. Ephrem carried to this work St. Ephrem. the authority of his long career, of his poetic and popular eloquence, of his austere genius, and of his noble combats against the shameless corruption[96] which infected that oriental civilization, from which it was necessary to separate truth and the future.

[95] St. Hilarion and St. Epiphanius are both objects of popular veneration to the modern Cypriotes: as M. de Mas-Latrie, who of all contemporary writers has best studied the history and monuments of that interesting island, proves.

[96] Rosweyde, p. 268.

Edessa was then the metropolis of those Syriac populations which had preserved their language and national spirit in the shelter of Greek influence. Ephrem was at once their apostle, their doctor, their orator, their poet. He translated the dogmas proclaimed at Nicæa, and the events of holy and evangelical History, into popular songs which might be heard many centuries after, in the plains of Syria. Becoming a monk at the same time as he became a Christian, he continued to his last day to instruct the monks his brethren and the people of Edessa. His eloquence was nervous and full of fire and unction. "The Holy Spirit," says St. Gregory of Nysse, "gave him so marvellous a fountain of knowledge, that, though the words flowed from his mouth like a torrent, they were too slow to express his thoughts. . . . He had to pray that God would moderate the inexhaustible flood of his ideas, saying, "Restrain, Lord, the tide of thy grace." . . . For that sea of knowledge, which would unceasingly flow forth by his tongue, overwhelmed him by its waves.[97] This great man of words was also a man of action: when Sapor, king of Persia, then the most redoubtable enemy of the Romans, came for the third time to besiege Nisibis, the bulwark of the faith and of the empire, Ephrem hastened to place himself by the side of the holy bishop Jacobus, who had baptized him; the two together, first upon the breach, superintended the works of defence, which ended in the defeat of the Persians. Some years later, when Julian, directing his arms against Persia, at the height of the persecution which he had renewed, seemed to threaten Edessa, which boasted of being the earliest converted city of the East, Ephrem sustained the courage of the inhabitants by his discourses, and to this critical moment belongs a famous oration entitled the *Pearl*, designed to celebrate under that symbol the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the pearl of great price of the Gospel, and in which are mingled "the mystic ardors of a solitary and the zeal of a Christian soldier hastening to his martyrdom." A faithful observer of monastic poverty, in the will which he dictated to his disciples, and in which he describes himself as a laborer who has finished his day's work, and a merchant traveller who returns to his own country, he declares that he has nothing to bequeath but his counsels and prayers — for Ephrem, says he, "has not even a staff or a wallet." His

378.

349.

[97] St. Gregory Nyss, *Encomium Ephræm. Syr.*, p. 11, quoted by M. de Broglie, from whom we have borrowed many of the facts which follow.

last words were a protest in favor of the dignity of man redeemed by the Son of God. The young and pious daughter of the governor of Edessa having come in tears to receive his last sigh, he made her swear on his deathbed to use no longer a litter carried by slaves, because the apostle has said, "The head of man should bear no yoke but that of Christ." [98]

In his discourses, this holy doctor condemns severely those vices and passions of the world which hid themselves under the robe of the monk. He denounces the contrast, then too frequent, between the exterior and the heart of the Religious — between the appearance and reality. He laments already the relaxation of ancient severity.[99] And yet he had lived for several years among the hermits of Mesopotamia, who reduced themselves in some degree to the state of savages, and who were surnamed *Browsers* (βοσκοί), because they had no other food than the mountain herbs, which they cut every morning with a knife, and ate uncooked.[100] While he was still living,[101] a Syrian monastery opened its doors to St. Simeon Stylites, who, from the top of his column, where he remained forty-eight years, was to present to the world the spectacle of the strangest and rudest penitence which it had yet seen. Such prodigies were, no doubt, necessary to strike the imagination and seize the conviction of the independent and nomadic people of these deserts; for it must not be forgotten that the Roman world under Constantine and his immediate successors was still half pagan. The rural districts especially remained faithful to idolatry. The monks succeeded at last in shaking their faith and converting them. Villages and entire tribes were led to the faith of Christ by the preaching of St. Hilarion in Syria, and of St. Moyse among the Saracens. Other monks converted the Phœnicians.[102] St. Simeon Stylites saw, at the foot of his column, not only his compatriots the Syrians, but also Persians, Arabs, Armenians, and even men who had come from Spain, Britain, and Gaul, to look on that prodigy of austerity, that slayer of his own body. He rewarded them for their curiosity and admiration by preaching to them the Christian truth. They went away Christians. The Arabs came in bands of two or three hundred; and thou-

St. Simeon Stylites.

[98] See in the *Tableau de l'Eloquence Chrétienne au* IV^e^ *Siècle*, by M. Villemain, his excellent sketch of St. Ephrem. — Comp. ALBERT DE BROGLIE, iii. 191; iv. 356.

[99] EPHREM SYR., t. iii. p. 539; ap. MOEHLER, op. cit., p. 378.

[100] SOZOMENE, vi. 33.

[101] ROSWEYDE, *Vit. Patr.*, p. 176.

[102] MOEHLER, p. 220.

sands among them, according to Theodoret, an eyewitness, enlightened by the light which descended from the column of the Stylite, abjured at his feet their idols and their vices, and returned Christians into their deserts.[103]

With such men for chiefs and masters, the monks spread their own manner of life simultaneously with the instructions of the faith, into all Mesopotamia, into Armenia, and beyond the Euphrates as far as Persia and India;[104] and the native Religious of these distant regions were seen arriving in bands to join the pilgrims of the West, of Africa, and of Asia Minor, who came to adore at Jerusalem the traces of the passion of our Saviour.[105]

Martyr monks in Persia.

These monks were not only missionaries, but often also martyrs of the faith among these idolatrous nations. One day that the sons of the king of Persia were at the chase, three monks were led before them who had been found taken in one of the immense nets which the royal huntsmen held over the surface of a whole country. At the sight of these shaggy and almost savage men, the princes asked one of them if he was a man or a spirit.[106] The monk answered: "I am a man and a sinner, who am come here to weep for my sins, and to adore the living Son of God." The princes replied that there was no God but the sun: a controversy ensued, and ended by the execution of the three hermits, whom the young princes amused themselves by taking as a target for their arrows. The last and most illustrious of these martyrs was Anastasius, who was a soldier of Chosroes when the true cross was taken by that prince: the sight of the sacred wood made him a Christian; he went to Jerusalem to become a monk; taken prisoner by the Persians, he endured tortures and death clothed in his monk's robe, which he called his dress of glory.[107]

25th January, 628.

[103] Theodoret, *Philothæus*, c. 26.

[104] "Illi enim Syros fere omnes, et ex Persis ac Saracenis quamplurimos ad religionem suam traduxerunt." — Theodoret, *Relig. Hist.*, lib. vi. c. 34.

[105] "De India, Perside, Ethiopia, monachorum quotidie turmas suscipimus." — S. Hieron., Ep. 7. *ad Lætam*, c. 2.

[106] "Miserunt retia in longum per millia quadraginta. . . . Inventus est autem senex cum duobus discipulis intra retia. Et cum vidisset eum pilosum et terribilem aspectu. . . ." — *Vit. Patr.*, lib. v. c. 7.

[107] "Hæc vestis est gloriatio mea." — Act. SS. Bolland., t. ii. *Jan.*, p. 433. His head was transferred to Rome, and deposited in the abbey of SS. Vincent and Anastasius *ad aquas Salvias*, near the place where St. Paul was beheaded. It is still venerated there, where is also admired a picture which represents his martyrdom, which is said to have come from Persia with his relics, and which is one of the most ancient monuments of Christian art.

Up to this period all these saints and monks lived in groups, under the sway of a discipline, always severe, but changeable, and varied according to the climates and individual instincts. This did not sufficiently preserve zeal from excess, nor weakness from scandalous falls. Certain primitive rules indeed existed, which circulated under the name of Anthony, of Macarius, of Pacome especially, and of his successor Orsiesus, but they had neither the authority nor the extent necessary to form a lasting legislation. Then God raised up a great man, St. Basil. His glory consists not only in having vanquished heresy and made head against emperors, but in having given to the monastic order a constitution which was shortly adopted by all the monks of the East.

St. Basil. 329-379.

Born in Cappadocia of a rich and noble family, educated with care at Cæsarea, at Constantinople, and above all at Athens, he had there contracted with his young compatriot, Gregory of Nazianzus, that indissoluble friendship, austere and impassioned, which fills so fine a page in the history of Christian affections and literature. "It was," says Gregory, "one soul which had two bodies. Eloquence, the thing in the world which excites the greatest desire, inspired us with an equal ardor, but without raising any jealousy between us: we lived in each other. . . . We knew only two paths: the first and the most beloved, that which led towards the Church and its doctors; the other less exalted, which conducted us to the school and our masters."[108] Excited by the emulation which was born of that tender intimacy, Basil drank largely at the fountains of profane knowledge and philosophy. From these he drew enough of noble pride to refuse all the dignities that were offered to him. But his sister Macrine, who, despite her rare beauty, in consequence of the death of her betrothed, remained a virgin, soon initiated him into a still higher and more disinterested philosophy. He quitted the schools to travel in search of the saints and monks: he lived with them in Egypt, in Palestine, and in Syria; he recognized the ideal of his soul, which was enamored at once of intellect and piety, in these men, who appeared to him travellers here below and citizens of heaven. He made up his mind to live as they did; and having returned to his own country, he retired at twenty-six into his paternal domain, which was situated in Pontus.

[108] S. Greg. Nazian., orat. 43. Compare A. de Broglie, iii. 288.

It was a savage place, barred by profound forests from all access of men, situated at the foot of a mountain environed with woods, deep valleys, and a rapid river, which fell foaming over a precipice. In this cherished retreat, which his imagination, inspired by classic influences, compared to the isle of Calypso, he could cultivate at ease that taste for the study of God's grandeur and perfection in the works of Nature, which inspired him with his famous discourse upon the Six days of Creation, known under the name of the *Hexameron*. And there, seeing in the distance the Euxine Sea, he was naturally led to connect the various aspects and thousand sounds of the sea with those of the human crowd, which he believed himself to have left forever, and that contemplation dictated to him a passage too fine not to be quoted. "The sea offers us a lovely spectacle when its surface is bright, or when, rippling gently under the wind, it is tinted with purple and green: when, without beating violently upon the shore, it surrounds the earth, and caresses her with its wild embraces. But it is not this which constitutes in the eyes of God the grace and beauty of the sea; it is its works which make it beautiful. See here the immense reservoir of water which irrigates and fertilizes the earth, and which penetrates into her bosom to reappear in rivers, in lakes, and in refreshing fountains; for in traversing the earth it loses its bitterness, and is almost civilized by the distance it travels. Thou art beautiful, oh sea! because in thy vast bosom thou receivest all the rivers, and remainest between thy shores without ever overleaping them. Thou art beautiful, because the clouds rise from thee. Thou art beautiful with thine isles spread over thy surface, because thou unitest by commerce the most distant countries — because, instead of separating them, thou joinest the nations, and bearest to the merchant his wealth and to life its resources. But if the sea is beautiful before men and before God, how much more beautiful is that multitude, that human sea, which has its sounds and murmurs, voices of men, of women, and of children, resounding and rising up to the throne of God" [109]

Upon the other bank of the river Iris, the mother and sister of Basil, forgetting their nobility and wealth, prepared themselves for heaven, living on terms of complete equality with their servants and other pious virgins. He himself was followed into his retreat by the friend of his youth, by his two

[109] I borrow from M. St. Marc Girardin, a translation which has not been surpassed.

brothers,[110] and an always increasing crowd of disciples. He then gave himself up entirely to austerities, to the study of sacred literature, and to the cultivation of the soil, eating only hard bread, lighting no fire, but fed and warmed by the ardor of his zeal for the service of God and the salvation of souls. In that rude apprenticeship he strengthened his soul for the great conflicts which raised him to the first rank among the doctors of the Church and holy pontiffs. When Julian the Apostate threatened the world with a return to that paganism which was scarcely vanquished and far from being extripated, St. Basil was drawn by force out of his solitude to be ordained a priest, and some years after was made Bishop of Cæsarea. It is well known how he astonished the world by the superiority of his genius and his eminent virtue. Ecclesiastical history does not contain a more glorious episode than the narrative of his intrepid and calm resistance to the attempts of the Emperor Valens against the faith of Nicæa, and his celebrated conference with the prefect of the prætorium Modestus. "I have never met with so much boldness," said the minister of the imperial will. "Doubtless," answered the saint, "you have never met a bishop." On going out from that conference, the prime minister said to his master, "Sire, we are vanquished; this bishop is above menaces; we have no alternative but force."[111] The emperor drew back, and the Church hailed Basil as the hero of the time. However, his great soul was as tender as strong; his unshaken faith longed always for a reconciliation with the misled Christians. Saddened by the divisions of the Church in the East, he passionately implored help from the West, from Pope Damasus, and, above all, from his illustrious rival in glory and courage, St. Athanasius. He understood so well the necessity of being gentle with the weak, that a certain leaning towards error was imputed to him, from which Athanasius defended him by two memorable epistles against the accusations of those extravagant minds, which are to be found in all ages, pusillanimous at the moment of peril, bold and implacable before and after the storm.

The monks whom he had trained were the most useful auxiliaries of orthodoxy against the Arians and semi-Arians, enemies of the divinity of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Ghost. They exercised the most salutary influence on all the clergy. Thus he continued to govern and multiply them,

[110] St. Gregory of Nysse, and St. Peter of Sebaste.
[111] S. Gregor. Nazianz., pp. 350, 351.

as priest and as bishop. He regarded them as the richest treasure of his diocese. He called them into his episcopal city; then, traversing the towns and plains of Pontus, he renewed the aspect of that province by collecting into regular monasteries the isolated monks, by regulating the exercise of prayer and psalmody, the care of the poor, and the practice of labor, and by opening numerous convents of nuns.[112] He became thus the first type of those monk-bishops who subsequently became the benefactors of all Europe and the originators of Christian civilization in the West. He seemed to have had especially in view the union of active with contemplative life, and of connecting the monks with the clergy and Christian people that they might become its light and strength.[113] Such is the spirit of his numerous writings upon monastic life, which demonstrate the grandeur of his genius, not less than his epistles and doctrinal works, which have gained him the name of the Christian Plato. Such especially appears his famous Rule, which shortly became the code of religious life, and was eventually the sole rule recognized in the East. Drawn out in the form of answers to two hundred and three different questions upon the obligations of the solitary life and upon the meaning of the most important texts of holy Scripture, and partly adapted to communities of both sexes, it bore throughout the stamp of the good sense and moderation which characterized its author.[114] It insisted upon the dangers of absolute solitude for humility and charity, upon the necessity of minute obedience, upon the abnegation of all personal property as of all individual inclination, and, above all, upon the perpetual duty of labor. He would not allow even fasting to be an obstacle to work: "If fasting hinders you from labor," says he, "it is better to eat like the workmen of Christ that you are." This was the pivot of monastic life, according to this patriarch of an institution, which so many ignorant and idle generations have not blushed to accuse of indolence. "Athletes, workmen of Jesus Christ," says this great bishop, "you

Rule of St. Basil.

[112] Ruffinus, *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. ii. c. 9.

[113] "Monasteriis exstructis, ita monachorum institutum temperavit, ut solitariæ atque actuosæ vitæ utilitates præclare simul conjungeret." — *Brev. Rom.*, *die* 14 *Junii*.

[114] "If St. Anthony was the restorer of cenobitical life, if St. Pacome gave it a better form, it is St. Basil who has brought it to entire perfection, in binding by formal vows those who attach themselves to this manner of life." — Helyot, *Hist. des Ordres Monastiques*, 1st part, c. 13. Compare Bulteau, *Hist. des Moines d'Orient*, pp. 305, 402.

have engaged yourselves to fight for Him all the day, to bear all its heat. Seek not repose before its end; wait for the evening, that is to say, the end of life, the hour at which the householder shall come to reckon with you, and pay you your wages."

St. Gregory of Nazianzus.

There is a name inseparable from the great name of Basil, that of another doctor of the Church, Gregory of Nazianzus, the tender friend of Basil's heart and youth, the companion of his studies and his retirement, the associate of his struggles and victories for orthodoxy, and, after his premature death, the celebrator of his glory. Like him, but not without a struggle, Gregory had renounced the world, reserving of all his temporal possessions only his eloquence, to employ it in the service of God. "I abandon to you all the rest," said he, addressing himself to the pagans, at the moment when Julian interdicted to the Christians even the study of letters — "wealth, birth, glory, authority, and all possessions here below, the charm of which vanishes like a dream: but I put my hand upon eloquence, and regret none of the labors, nor journeys by land and sea which I have undertaken to acquire it." [115] And later he added, "One sole object in the world has possessed my heart: the glory of eloquence. I have sought it in all the earth, in the west, in the east, and especially at Athens, that ornament of Greece. I have labored long years for it; but this glory also I come to lay at the feet of Christ, under the empire of that divine word which effaces and throws into the shade the perishable and changeful form of all human thought." [116] He had besides shared with Basil his solitary and laborious life, and when they were both drawn from that to be condemned to the still more painful toils of the episcopate, Gregory loved to recall to his friend the pleasant times when they cultivated together their monastic garden. "Who shall bring back to us," he wrote to his friend, "those days when we labored together from morning till evening? when sometimes we cut wood, sometimes we hewed stones? when we planted and watered our trees, when we drew together that heavy wagon, the marks of which have so long remained on our hands?" [117] He was called to Constantinople to confound the heretics there; and it is well known what glory he won by his courage and that eloquence which had at last found its true

[115] S. Greg. Nazianz., *Oper.*, t. i. p. 132, translation of M. Villemain.
[116] *Carmina*, p. 636, translation of M. de Broglie.
[117] S. Greg. Nazianz., Ep. 9 and 13.

element, and how the will of the Emperor Theodosius, and the suffrages of the second œcumenical council, ele-
381. vated him, in spite of himself, to the patriarchal chair, where he would employ against the Arians only the weapons of persuasion. "Let us never be insolent when the times are favorable," he had already said to the orthodox, delivered from the persecution of Julian — "let us never show ourselves hard to those who have done us wrong: let us not imitate the acts which we have blamed. Let us rejoice that we have escaped from peril, and abhor everything that tends to reprisals. Let us not think of exiles and proscriptions; drag no one before the judge; let not the whip remain in our hands; in a word, do nothing like that which you have suffered."[118] He descended from that elevation as promptly as he could, happy to leave the centre of theological dissensions, and of that corruption the excesses of which he had depicted with so much boldness and grief. It was to re-enter into a rustic solitude in his native country.
391. There he ended his life, after two years divided between the hardest austerities of monastic life and the cultivation of poetry, which he continued to pursue, that the pagans might not be left in sole possession of the palm of literature, and also to give a free course to the noble and delicate sadness of his soul.[119] His graceful, melancholy, and sometimes sublime verses have gained him a place almost as high as his profound knowledge of divine things; and the monastic order may boast of having produced in him the father of Christian poetry, as well as the doctor who has merited the name of Theologian of the East.

No other man had painted monastic life with an admiration so impassioned as the illustrious friend of Basil in his discourse upon the death of Julian, in that passage where he apostrophizes him as the enemy of the Church, confronting him with "those men who are on earth, yet above the earth, . . . at once bound and free, subdued and unsubduable, . . . who have two lives, one which they despise, another which alone fills all their thoughts; become immortal by mortifica-

[118] *Orat.* v. 36, 37. — The following passage is also well worthy of remark: "Non odium significando et conviciando sollicite et anxie verba faciebam, dolens, non plagas infigens. Leniter verbis et convenienter compellabam, ut verbi defensor misericordis et mansueti, AC NEMINEM CONTERENTIS. Hæc meis inscripta erant tabulis." — *Oper.*, ed. Caillau., t. ii. p. 737.

[119] See the charming pages which M. Villemain has devoted to the poetry of St. Gregory of Nazianzus in his *Tableau de l'Eloquence Chrétienne au* IVe *Siècle.*

tion; strangers to all desire, and full of the calm of the divine love; who drink at the fountain of its light, and already reflect its rays; whose angelical psalmodies fill all the watches of the night, and whose rapturous souls already emigrate towards heaven; . . . solitary, and mingling in the concerts of another life, chastising all voluptuousness, but plunged in ineffable delights; whose tears drown sin and purify the world; whose extended hands stay the flames, tame the beasts, blunt the swords, overturn the battalions, and come now, be assured, to confound thy impiety, even though thou shouldst escape some days, and play thy comedy with thy demons." [120]

The monks at Byzantium and in all the East.

Thus, a century after Anthony had inaugurated cenobitical life in the deserts of Egypt, it was firmly established in Asia Minor, and carried as far as the shores of the Euxine, by Basil and his illustrious friend. From that time no province of the Oriental Church was without monks. They established themselves like an orthodox garrison in the midst and at the gates of Constantinople, the principal centre of the heresies which desolated the Church in the fourth century. Acquiring in solitude and labor that strength which contemporary society, enslaved and degraded by the imperial rule, had lost, the monks and nuns formed already an entire nation, with the rule of Basil for their code; a nation distinct at once from the clergy and from the common believers; a new and intrepid people, spreading everywhere, and multiplying unceasingly, and in which neither the friends nor the enemies of the Church could fail to recognize her principal force.

Violent opposition against the monks.

Her enemies especially did not deceive themselves on this score, and from thence arose a permanent and desperate opposition against the new institution. This arose from various sources,[121] but the efforts and results by which it showed itself were identical. The pagans and Arians, who, united, formed the great majority of the population of the empire, showed equal virulence. All the *savants*, philosophers, and men of letters among the pagans, were emulous in their protest. The impassioned activity of the monks against idolatry, their efforts, more and more successful, to extirpate it from the heart of the rural population, naturally exasperated the last defenders of the idols. Besides, the voluntary suffering which they preached and prac-

[120] *Orat.* iv., M. de Broglie's translation.
[121] Moehler, op. cit., p. 201.

tised, the subjection to which they reduced their bodies, the war which they declared with nature, were the antipodes of Greek wisdom. All the wit that remained in that worn-out society was exercised at their expense. The rhetorician Libanus[122] pursued them with his mockeries, accused them of making their virtue consist in wearing mourning, and hoped to wound them by calling them *black men*.[123] The sophist Eunapius lamented that it was enough for any one, as he says, to appear in public with a black robe, in order to exercise tyrannical authority with impunity. He depicted the monks as men whose lives were not only base but criminal.[124] The echo that all these sarcasms would awaken amid the corruption of the two Romes may be supposed. But amongst these vain protests of a vanquished world, those who went farthest in rage and rancor against the Religious were the rich, and heads of families, who saw their children and heirs abandon them to bury themselves in solitude and penitence; for it was then, as it has always been since, in the bosoms of the most opulent families that these sacrifices were consummated.

Arian persecutions and taxings.

The Arians were still more implacable than the pagans. The tendency of these enemies of the divinity of Christ was in everything to abuse, degrade, and restrain the spirit of Christianity. How should the monastic life, which was its most magnificent development, escape their fury? The war between them and the monks was therefore long and cruel. The emperors became their accomplices. The persecution which paganism had scarcely time to light up to its own advantage under Julian, was pitiless under the Arian Constantius, and more skilful, without being more victorious, under the Arian Valens. In the time of Constantius entire monasteries, with the monks they contained, were burnt in Egypt; and after the death of Athanasius, in the frightful persecution which the intruder Lucius, imposed by Valens, raised in Alexandria, a troop of imperial soldiers ravaged the solitude of Nitria, and massacred its inhabitants.[125] Twenty-three monks and eleven bishops, all children of the desert, are named among the confessors of the orthodox faith who were then con-

[122] *Oratio pro Templis*, pp. 10, 13, 28, 30, 49; ed. 1639.

[123] Black was not yet, however, exclusively adopted by the monks at the time when Libanus wrote. It is supposed that St. Anthony, and many monks contemporary with him, were clothed in white.

[124] Eunap., *in Adesio, Vit. Philos.*, c. 4. [125] Ruffin., liv. ii. c. 3, 4.

demned to the mines or to banishment.[126] The slavery of the unfortunate rich men whom the imperial government condemned to fill municipal offices under the name of *curials* and of *decurions*, and to be held perpetually responsible to the treasury, is known. In that age of fetters, this chain seemed the hardest of all.[127] Many sought to break it by taking refuge in the voluntary servitude of the cloister. The Arians profited by that pretext to suggest to the Emperor Valens a law which commanded the Count of the East to search out the deserts of the Thebaid, and seize these men, whom he calls loose deserters, in order to send them back to their civil obligations.[128] Another law of the same emperor, inspired by the same spirit, endeavored to compel the monks to military service, and beat to death those who refused to enroll themselves. A great number were sacrificed for this cause in Nitria.[129] Most of the magistrates gladly executed these sovereign orders; and the monks were everywhere snatched from their retreats, surrounded, imprisoned, beaten, and exposed to most tyrannical harassments.[130] These legal cruelties encouraged the violence of private persons who were animated by hatred of the faith of Nicæa or of Christian virtue. Under pretext of penetrating into the monasteries, and bringing out of them the young monks fit for military service, bands of ruffians forced their gates, invaded their cells, seized the monks, and threw them forth into the streets or upon the highways; and each boasted of having been the first to denounce a monk, to strike him, or to cast him into a dungeon. "It is intolerable," said these friends of humanity, "to see men free and noble, healthy and strong, masters of all the joys of this world, condemn themselves to a life so hard and so revolting."

Thus the philosophers and the emperors, the heretics and the profligates, were leagued against the cenobites, and the invectives of the one had for a corollary the violence of the

[126] Theodoret, iv. 22.

[127] Champagny, op. cit.

[128] This law is of 373. — "Quidam ignaviæ sectatores, desertis civitatum muneribus, captant solitudines ac secreta, et specie religionis cum cœtibus monazontum congregantur. Hos igitur atque hujusmodi *intra Ægyptum* deprehensos *per comitem Orientis* erui e latebris consulta præceptione mandavimus, atque ad munia patriarum subeunda revocari." — Leg. *Quidam*, 63; Cod. Theod., lib. xii. tit. i., *De Decur.* Compare Raynouard, *Hist. du Droit Municipal*, t. i. c. 11.

[129] "Multi monachorum Nitriæ per tribunos et milites cæsi. Valens, lege data ut monachi militarent, nolentes fustibus interfici jussit." — S. Hieron.

[130] "Cum monachi publica magistratuum auctoritate extrema paterentur." — Montfaucon, *in edit. S. Joan Chrysost.*

others. And even among orthodox Christians there were critical spirits: these reproached the new institutions with withdrawing its disciples from public life; depriving society of the beneficent influence of those who were best qualified to serve it; stealing away from their duties men born for the good of their neighbors and their kind; and, in short, opening too honorable an asylum to indolence, unworthiness, and hypocrisy.

St. John Chrysostom constitutes himself the apologist of the monks.

It was then that God raised for the defence of his servants another great man, greater by his eloquence than any that had hitherto appeared in the Church — St. John Chrysostom, the Christian Cicero. Born at Antioch, his friend and the companion of his studies was a young man who desired to embrace the monastic profession, and who had proposed to him to prelude it by life in common. But he himself was destined for the bar and public life. He was, besides, retained in the world by the love of his mother, who besought him not to render her a widow for the second time. Suddenly the two friends were chosen as bishops. Then John, convinced of his unworthiness, abandoned at once the world, his friend, and his mother, and escaped ordination by flying into solitude.[131] But in that solitude he discovered a new world. It was in the mountains near Antioch that he sought a retreat, and these mountains were already peopled by monks, emulators of the disciples of Anthony and Basil. The ardent young man took one of them, an old Syrian of formidable austerity,[132] for his master and guide in monastic life, and devoted four years to that spiritual education. Then he passed two years alone, secluded in a cavern, exclusively occupied in subduing his passions, which he compares to wild beasts. It is thus that he prepared unawares the power of that eloquence which was to delight his contemporaries, make the very churches echo with the applauses which it raised, and draw out of the cities a crowd intoxicated with the happiness of hearing him, and scarcely sheltered from the ardor of the sun by vast awnings suspended over them. But, above all, it was in this rude apprenticeship that he learned to know

[131] He himself relates this touching story in the first book of his fine treatise *De Sacerdotio*. In book sixth and last of this treatise, he points out to his friend Basil that the life of the priest and bishop is still more meritorious and difficult than that of the monk. This St. Basil, friend of Chrysostom, and Bishop of Raphana, must not be confounded with the great St. Basil, Bishop of Cæsarea, who was twenty years older than St. John Chrysostom.

[132] Pallad., *Dial. de Vit. S. Joan. Chrysost.*, c. 5.

the combats and victories of the monks. He derived from this the right and the power of speaking the truth concerning their life, and in 376, at the height of the persecution of Valens, he wrote his three books *Against the Adversaries of Monastic Life*,[133] which carried his fame afar, and vindicated innocence and uprightness with the incomparable eloquence of which his name has become the symbol.

He shows, in the first place, by the example of the Jews and pagan emperors, the terrible chastisements which are incurred by persecution of the saints and friends of God. He addresses himself then to those fathers whom the conversion of their sons had rendered furious, and who cried out, I burn, I rend, I burst with rage![134] He shows them, by examples borrowed even from profane history, the grandeur and fertility of sacrifice, labor, and solitude. He paints to us one of these young and noble lords, who might then be seen clothed more miserably than the meanest of their slaves, laboring barefooted on the earth, lying down upon hard couches, emaciated by fasting, and he asks triumphantly if there had ever been a greater or more noble victory of human courage than that sacrifice of all worldly possessions for the possessions of the soul. Then turning to the Christian parents who have been persuaded to mingle their lamentations with the rage of the pagan fathers, he crushes them under the weight of the divine authority and reason enlightened by faith. That admirable invective against the parents who, opposing the vocation of their children, enslave and kill their souls, a thousand times more cruel than those who murder their sons or sell them as slaves to the barbarians, should be quoted entire. He exhorts them ardently to confide the education of their sons to the solitaries — to those *men of the mountain* whose lessons he himself had received. He grants that they might afterwards return to the world, but only after having initiated them thus in Christian virtue, for the monasteries were the sole asylums for purity of manners in the midst of universal corruption. These are, he says, refuges destined to fill up the abyss which separates the ideal of the law of Christ from the reality of the manners of Christians; certainly he would turn no one from public life or social duties, if society was faithful to its duties; monasteries would be useless if the cities were Christian. But they were not so, and to prove it, the holy doctor drew

[133] *Adversus Oppugnatores Vitæ Monasticæ.*

[134] "Uror, laceror, disrumpor." — Chrysost., *Adv. Opp. Vit. Mon.*, ii. 8.

a picture of the corruption which he had witnessed at Antioch and elsewhere.

Nothing could be more repulsive than these manners, which reproduced all the excesses of ancient debauchery in their most revolting refinements. How deeply everything was poisoned in that empire, still so dazzling for its strength and immensity — how little the conversion of the emperors had converted the world — and how miserable was the condition of souls and consciences amid that over-vaunted alliance of the Church and the empire — is seen there. Society was Christian only in name; the heart and mind remained pagan. In the East especially, where the bishops and clergy were infested by stubborn and incessantly-renewed heresies, and where the government of souls was either absorbed or rendered impossible by the perils of orthodoxy, the monks alone offered to Christian virtue a resource and a hope. Thus their intrepid apologist never names monastic life otherwise than as *the true philosophy*. It was this that made simple Christians more powerful than emperors, because it put them above the vices which ravaged the empire; and he develops this idea in an admirable supplement to the three books of his apology, where he establishes a comparison between the power, the wealth, and the excellence of a king, and those of a monk living in the true and Christian philosophy. He compares them in war and in peace, in their daily and nightly occupations, in prosperity and in adversity, in life and in death; and he awards the palm of incontestable superiority to the potentate who has the privilege of delivering souls from the tyranny of the devil by his prayers alone.[135]

These magnificent pleadings sum up all the arguments in favor of monastic life with an eloquence which remains always true. They have never been better expressed; and it is enough to re-read and repeat them, against the same objections, the same sophisms, the same falsehoods perpetually reproduced. After the lapse of fifteen centuries, we find these noble words always opportune and conclusive; because in that constantly renewed struggle between the friends and enemies of monastic life, it is the unvarying ground of human nature — it is the soul and its life by love and faith — it is the eternal revolt of evil against the sole influence which insures victory and fertility to goodness, the spirit of sacrifice — which are brought in question.

[135] "Comparatio potentiæ, divitiarum et excellentiæ regis cum monacho in verissima et Christiana philosophia vivente."

The great and celebrated doctor did not content himself with this brilliant stroke. He continued, during all the course of his career, to defend and extol the monastic institution, not only as he admired it in the Thebaid, where the tabernacles of the cenobites shone, as he says, with a splendor purer than that of the stars in heaven,[136] but, even such as it was seen, with its infirmities and divisions already apparent, throughout the East. Almost all his works bear the trace of this predilection; but it is nowhere more visible than in his Ninety Homilies upon St. Matthew,[137] preached during his sojourn at Antioch, from which we shall quote a curious passage, which is strangely and sadly seasonable even in our own time.

He here sets forth the effect which the contrast of monastic life with the feasts, pomps, debauches, and prodigalities of wealth should produce upon the souls of the poor. He supposes a man of the lower classes transported suddenly into the midst of the theatres of Constantinople, where voluptuousness used all its resources to stimulate the sated appetite of the wealthy classes of the Lower Empire, and he adds: "The poor man will be irritated by that spectacle; he will say to himself, "See what profligates, what debauchees — children perhaps of butchers or shoemakers, and even of slaves — see what luxury they display; whilst I, a free man, born of free parents, who gain my living by honest labor — I cannot enjoy such happiness even in a dream;" and so saying he goes away, penetrated with rage and sadness. But among the monks he experiences an entirely contrary impression. There he sees the sons of the rich, the offspring of the most illustrious races, clad in garments which the poorest would not wear, and joyful of that mortification. Think how much more pleasant his poverty will appear to him! When the courtesan at the theatre exhibits herself all adorned and jewelled, the poor man mutters with rage, thinking that his own wife neither wears nor possesses any such ornaments; and the rich man returns to his house inflamed by his recollections, and already the captive of his guilty desires, to scorn and ill-use his wife. But those who return from visiting the monks bring with them only peace and happiness: the wife finds her husband delivered from all

[136] *Homil. in Matth.* 8, p. 147, edit. Gaume.

[137] A valuable picture of the internal life of monasteries, and a comparison of monastic with secular life, should also be remarked in the Homilies on the *First Epistle to Timothy*, t. xi. p. 476–479, edit. Gaume.

unjust covetousness, more gentle, more accommodating, more tender than before; the poor man consoles himself in his poverty, and the rich learn virtue and abstinence."[138]

Doubtless this striking vindication did not put an end to the persecutions of which the monks were victims. They continued to be slandered, vexed, and cruelly treated whenever, as often happened, the imperial power became the prey or the instrument of heresy. A law of Valentinian II. ordained, in 390, that all the monks should leave the towns, where they had become more and more numerous since the time of Basil, and retire into the desert.[139] But it was abrogated by Theodosius.

Chrysostom, whose life we do not undertake to relate, was afterwards raised to the See of Constantinople. He gained there the admiration of the whole Church by the heroism of his long martyrdom. He employed all his authority to protect the monks, as also to maintain regularity in the order. With one hand he severely repressed the vagabond monks, who fled from discipline, yet pretended to keep up the exterior and the respect due to their order; on the other, he entered into relations with the Religious who were already to be found among the Goths,[140] with whom the empire began to be inundated, and sent monks to Phœnicia to labor there for the extirpation of paganism from that country.

398.

Chrysostom and the monks of Cæsarea.

However, this great champion of the honor and liberty of the monks was not destined to find among all of them the gratitude which he merited. In these violent struggles against the abuses and injustice of Byzantine government, spiritual and temporal, which gained him from the historian Zosimus the name of *demagogue* — which inflamed against him the imbecile jealousy of the Emperor Arcadius, the wounded pride of the Empress Eudoxia, and the interested rage of the courtiers and the rich, and which twice thrust him from his patriarchal see — Chrysostom had won the sympathies of the people, who often rose on his behalf. But he had constantly to contend, not only

[138] " . . . Intra se dicet: Meretrix illa et scortator, lanionum vel sutorum, nonnunquam servorum filii. Ego vero liber et ex liberis ortus. . . . Pauper ejulabit et deplorabit uxorem suam, videns nihil istiusmodi habentem." — S. JOANN. CHRYSOST., *in Matth. Homil.*, 68, ed. Gaume, t. vii. p. 761.

[139] " Quicumque sub professione monachi reperiuntur, deserta loca et vastas solitudines sequi atque habitare jubeantur." — COD. THEOD., lib. xvi. tit. 3.

[140] Ep. 14 and 207.

against simoniacal bishops and a servile clergy, but even against monks who too often mingled in the intrigues and violence of which he was the victim. He has himself related to us how, during the cruel fatigues of his exile, the short interval of hospitable repose which he hoped to find at Cæsarea was disturbed by a horde of monks, or rather of ferocious beasts, placed there by a courtier bishop, who terrified the clergy and even the soldiers of the garrison, and succeeded in expelling him from the city in all the heat of a fever by which he was devoured, and at the risk of falling into the hands of the Isaurian brigands who ravaged the country.[141] But the violence of wretches, unworthy of the name and robe they bore, drew from him no recrimination, and especially no retractation of the praise which he had up to that time lavished on the true monks. He had a soul too just and too lofty to forget for a personal wrong all the examples of monastic courage and virtue with which his memory was stored. He especially loved to recall that he had seen the hermits of Antioch, whose disciple and advocate he had been, quit their mountains and caverns to console and encourage the inhabitants of Antioch threatened by the bloody vengeance of Theodosius. While the philosophers of the town went to hide themselves in the desert, the inhabitants of the desert issued from it to brave and partake the common danger. In the midst of the universal consternation they appeared before the ministers of imperial wrath like lions, says Chrysostom, and made them suspend the execution of the pitiless sentence.

404.

The monks of Antioch and the commissioners of Theodosius.

388.

"Go," said one of the monks, a simple and unlettered man, to the commissioners of Theodosius, "go and say from me to the emperor: you are an emperor, but you are a man, and you command men who are your fellow-creatures, and who are made in the image of God. Fear the wrath of the Creator if you destroy His work. You, who are so much displeased when your images are overthrown, shall God be less if you destroy His? Your statues of bronze are made anew and replaced, but when you shall have killed men, the images of God, how can you resuscitate the dead, or even restore a hair of their head?"[142] Having said this, and the judge yielding, they left the city and returned into their solitude.

[141] "Ἀροῦγγος μοναζόντων . . . τῶν θηρίων τουτῶν." — *Epist. ad Olympiad.* 14, iii. 717, ed. Gaume.

[142] St. John Chrysostom, Hom. 17 et 18, *ad Popul. Antioch.* — Theodoret, *Hist.*, lib. v. c. 19.

The monk Telemachus puts an end to the combats of the gladiators.

1st January 404.

The same year which saw the barbarity of the monks of Cæsarea toward St. John Chrysostom is forever memorable in the annals of humanity by the heroic sacrifice of an Eastern monk. In its desperate struggle against the religion which was to avenge and save the human race from its long decline, paganism had found a popular and strong refuge in the public spectacles. These circus games, which had been the price of Roman servitude, faithfully paid by the emperors to a degraded people, but which were as sanguinary as amid the struggles of her warlike history, preserved their fatal ascendency over the hearts, the imaginations, and the habits of the Roman people. In vain had the doctors and defenders of the Christian faith expended since Tertullian their most generous efforts and unwearied eloquence against this remnant of the vanquished civilization. In vain they represented to the disciples of the Gospel, the horror of these bloody games, in which so many thousand martyrs of every age, sex, and country had perished, and where the devil unceasingly recruited new victims, voluntarily enslaved to luxury and cruelty, for the innumerable spectators. In vain, at last, the sovereign authority sanctioned the prohibitions of the Church. The public taste had stubbornly maintained its favorite recreation during all the fourth century against the Church and the emperors. The combats of the gladiators were still the delight of Roman decadence. St. Augustine has left a striking picture of the infatuation which mastered their souls, when, like Alypius, they allowed themselves to be intoxicated by the blood shed in the amphitheatre, the fumes of which transformed into pagans, into savages, the most intelligent and worthy spectators. Under the reign of Honorius, the Christian poet Prudentius demanded in eloquent verse the abolition of that cruel scandal. "Let no one die again to delight us with his agonies! Let the odious arena, content with its wild beasts, give man no more for a bloody spectacle. Let Rome, vowed to God, worthy of her prince, and powerful by her courage, be powerful also by her innocence." [143]

The weak Honorius, far from listening to this appeal, had, on the occasion of his sixth consulate, restored to life an entirely pagan institution, the celebration of the secular games, and had specially included in it the combats of gladi-

[143] *Contra Symm.*, ii. 114, translated by Ozanam, *Œuvres*, vol. ii. p. 231.

ators. When the announcement of these games had been published everywhere in all the empire, and had thus penetrated into the deserts, a monk, until then unknown, named Telemachus, of Nitria according to some, of Phrygia according to others, took one of those resolutions, the simple grandeur and immense results of which appear only after their accomplishment. He left his cell, travelled from the depths of the East to Rome, arrived there in time to be present at the imperial solemnities, entered the Colosseum, burst through the waves of people all palpitating with a ferocious curiosity, and threw himself between the gladiators engaged in combat. The indignant spectators pursued this untimely interruption, this fool, this black fanatic, first with furious clamors, then with blows of stones and sticks. Stoned like the first martyrs of Christianity, Telemachus fell, and the gladiators whom he had desired to separate, completed the work. But his blood was the last shed in that arena where so much had flowed. The nobleness of his sacrifice showed the full horror of the abuse which he would have overthrown. An edict of Honorius proscribed forever the games of gladiators. From that day it is no more heard of in history. The crime of so many centuries was extinguished by the blood of a monk, who happened to be a hero.

But we must here leave the monks of the East. They have occupied us thus far only as the precursors and models of the monks of the West. It is not our task to relate the conflicts, often generous, which they had to wage during the fifth and sixth centuries against the Nestorian and Eutychian heresies, one of which contested the unity of the person of Jesus Christ, and the other the duality of His nature, which ravaged successively the Church of the East, and which were sustained with perseverance and obstinacy by almost all the emperors and patriarchs of Constantinople. Nor shall we need to contemplate the sad decline of their strength and virtue, to the state of stagnation, and then of decay, which became by degrees the dominant character of monastic life in the East.

Decadence of the monks of the East.

Doubtless there still remained, after the glorious names which we have quoted up to this point, some names honored and dear to the Church. St. Dalmatius, St. Euthymius, St. Sabas, St. Theodosius, St. John Climachus, and others, filled with the odor of their virtues the monasteries of Constantinople, the solitudes of the Thebaid, the *lauras*[144] of the en-

[144] The name of *laura* was given to a conjunction of several hermitages,

virons of Jerusalem, and the peaks and gorges of Sinai. In the struggles which demanded so much heroic patience, constant vigilance, and calm and intrepid courage, against the pride and blindness of the emperors, the passionate presumption of the empresses, and the bad faith and envy of the patriarchs of Constantinople, the orthodox popes and bishops found zealous and faithful auxiliaries among the monks of the East. Many suffered martyrdom in defence of the dogmas which had been established by the General Councils of Chalcedon and Constantinople.[145] Let us give a word of recollection in passing to that monk of the monastery of Studius, near the golden gate of Byzantium, who, in the conflict between Pope Felix III. and the patriarch Acacius, had alone the courage to publish the decree of excommunication pronounced against the latter by the pope and sixty-seven bishops of Italy. As the patriarch was on his way to church to celebrate pontifical mass, this monk attached to his mantle the sentence which condemned him, and thus made him carry it himself to the foot of the altar and before all the people.[146] He paid for this boldness with his life. History has not preserved his name, but has glorified his example, which, however, had scarcely any imitators.

For it must be admitted that, by means of theological discussions and subtleties, the spirit of intrigue and revolt introduced itself into the monasteries. Eutychius himself was a monk and abbot of Constantinople, and after him the Eutychians and the Originists made numerous recruits in the monastic ranks: they appeared under the monastic habit as under the episcopal tiara, in the synods and in the councils. Among the true servants of God, false brethren glided in almost everywhere, raising with warmth condemnable or extravagant opinions. Others, more numerous still, wandered from town to town, or from house to house, and thus casting off all discipline, compromised at once the sanctity of their institution and the dignity of their robe. Their superiors,

the inhabitants of which lodged in cells removed at a certain distance from one another, but under the same superior. A *laura* presented almost the appearance of a modern charter-house. They were especially numerous about the environs of Jerusalem. The most extensive was that of St. Sabas, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, where this saint assembled as many as seventy recluses. Most frequently, these *lauras*, after a certain time, were transformed into ordinary monasteries.

[145] Under the Emperor Anastasius, more than three hundred and fifty monks were massacred by the Eutychian heretics at Antioch.

[146] Fleury, lib. xxx. c. 16.

spiritual and temporal, used their authority in vain to repress that abuse, which reappeared perpetually.

Decrees of the Council of Chalcedon concerning the monks.

To bring a remedy to these scandals and dangers, and with the formally acknowledged intention of restraining all these vagabond and turbulent monks, the General Council of Chalcedon, on the proposition of the Emperor Marcian, decreed that no monastery should be built henceforward without the consent of the bishop of the diocese, and that the monks, as much in the towns as in the country, should submit to the episcopal authority in everything, under pain of excommunication. They were expressly interdicted from going out of the monastery where they had been first received, and from mixing themselves with any ecclesiastical or secular business.[147] After having renewed an ancient prohibition against the marriage of monks, the Council ordained besides that every monastery, once consecrated by the bishop, should preserve its special destination in perpetuity, and could never become a secular habitation.[148]

These enactments became from that time part of the common law of Christendom, and must be kept in remembrance, because we shall have afterwards to record the numerous infractions to which they were subjected. Besides, they did not exercise upon the monks of the East a sufficiently efficacious influence to maintain them at the height of early times. After an age of unparalleled virtue and fruitfulness — after having presented to the monastic life of all ages, not only immortal models, but also a kind of ideal almost unattainable — the monastic order allowed itself to be overcome, through all the Byzantine empire, by that enfeeblement and sterility of which Oriental Christianity has been the victim. One by one, these glorious centres of light, knowledge, and life, which the Anthonys, the Hilarions, the Basils, and the Chrysostoms, had animated with their celestial light, were extinguished, and disappeared from the pages of history. While the monks of the West, under the vivifying influence of the Roman See, strove victoriously against the corruption of the ancient world, converted and civilized barbarous nations, transformed and purified the new elements, preserved the treasures of ancient literature, and maintained the traditions of all the secret and profane sciences, the monks of the East

[147] See the speech of the emperor in the 6th *action* or session of the Council, and the Canons 4, 6, 7, 8, and 23.

[148] Canons 16 and 24.

sank gradually into nothingness. Intoxicated by the double influence of courtierism and theological discord, they yielded to all the deleterious impulses of that declining society, of whose decay despotism was at once the result and the chastisement, and the laxness of whose morals gave an irresistible ascendency to all the caprices of power, and constant impunity to its excesses. They could neither renovate the society which surrounded them, nor take possession of the pagan nations which snatched away every day some new fragment of the empire. They knew no better how to preserve the Church from the evil influences of the Byzantine spirit. Even the deposit of ancient knowledge escaped from their debilitated hands. They have saved nothing, regenerated nothing, elevated nothing.

They ended, like all the clergy of the East, by becoming slaves of Islamism and accomplices of schism. Since then, fifteen centuries have passed over their heads without interrupting their downfall for a single day, or preparing a regenerator for the future. It has been with religion as with the glory of arms and the splendor of letters. Following a mysterious but incontestable law, it is always from the East to the West that progress, light, and strength have gone forth. Like the light of day, they are born in the East, but rise and shine more and more in proportion as they advance towards the West.

As the empire of the world passed from the Asiatics to the Greeks, and from the Greeks to the Romans, the truth passed from Jerusalem to Rome. Monastic life, like the Church, was founded in the East; but, like the Church also, acquired its true form only in the West. We must follow and study it there, to admire its complete and lasting grandeur.

BOOK III.

MONASTIC PRECURSORS IN THE WEST.

SUMMARY.

St. Athanasius, exiled, propagates the monastic order in the West and at Rome, where religious life had already been known during the last persecutions: Aglae and Boniface. — Development in Italy: Eusebius of Vercelli. — Movement of the Roman Nobility towards Monastic Life: last ray of aristocratic glory buried in the cloister. — The family Anicia. — The holy and religious patrician ladies: Marcella. — Furia. — Paula and her daughters. — Paulina and her husband Pammachus: Fabiola. — St. Jerome, guide and historian of these holy women. — His monastic life at Chalcis and Bethlehem: he writes the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert*, and points out the errors of the false monks of his times. — Roman Emigration into Palestine. — Jerome attracts to Jerusalem St. Paula and her daughter Eustochia: death of Paula. — The two Melanies at Jerusalem, at Rome, in Africa. — St. Paulin of Nole and his wife Teresia. — Opposition against the Monks: popular invectives: the poet Rutilius. — St. Ambrose defends them. — His book *De Virginitate*: note on the use of the veil. — St. Augustine: influence of the *Life of St. Anthony* by Athanasius, and the example of the monks, on his conversion: he lives always in the strictest seclusion. — Rule of St. Augustine. — His treatise *De Opere Monachorum* against the idle monks. — St. Fulgentius. — The Monks in Gaul. — St. Athanasius. — St. Martin, soldier, monk, and bishop. — His relations with St. Hilary. — He founds at Ligugé the first monastery of the Gauls. — His great position as Bishop of Tours: he protests against religious persecution. — He founds Marmoutier, and inhabits there one of the cells. — Sulpicius Severus: the monks of Gaul rebel against fasting. — The Monastery of Lerins: its doctors and its saints: Honoratius, Hilary of Arles, Vincent of Lerins, Salvian, Eucher, Lupus of Troyes. — St. Cæsar and his rule. — John Cassianus and St. Victor of Marseilles. — Pelagianism falsely imputed to Lerins. — Other Gaulish monasteries: Réome in Burgundy. — Monasteries in Auvergne: Austremoine, Urbicus, the Stylites. — Condat in the Jura: the two brothers Romain and Lucipin: Eugende and Viventiole. — Influence of the monks upon the Burgundians. — The king Sigismund founds in Valais, Agaune, which becomes the monastic metropolis of the kingdom of Burgundy. — St. Severus exercises the same sway over the other barbarians, on the

shores of the Danube: Meeting of Odoacer and Severin. — Summary: position of the cenobitical institution at the end of the fifth century; services already rendered to Christendom; duties of the monks in the Church; they are not yet counted among the clergy, yet notwithstanding almost all the Fathers and great doctors are monks. — Abuses and Disorders: monks *Gyrovagues* and *Sarabaites*. — Multiplicity and diversity of rules. — The monastic institution was not yet regulated. — A sovereign legislation and a new impulse were necessary: which St. Benedict gave.

Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her. . . . For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. — Isaiah lxvi. 10, 12.

The monastic stream, which had been born in the deserts of Egypt, divided itself into two great arms. The one spread in the East, at first inundated everything, then concentrated and lost itself there. The other escaped into the West, and spread itself by a thousand channels over an entire world which had to be covered and fertilized. We must return upon our track to follow it. Its beginnings are certainly less ancient and less brilliant, but the bed which it hollowed for itself is, on the other hand, deeper and more prolonged.

Athanasius propagates the monastic institution in the West.

First of all, we anew encounter Athanasius, whom we have seen associated with the great patriarchs of the cenobites — the guest, the disciple, and the client of Anthony, the defender of Basil. His life is well known. Exile was then the portion of the confessors of the faith, but it was also the means chosen by God to spread afar the seed of virtue and truth. Constantine, who troubled the Church after having delivered it, inflicted that penalty first upon Athanasius. Constantius and the Arians subjected him to it so often, that he might be said to have lived almost as much in exile as in his see. He returned there always calm and intrepid, happy to be the victim and not the author of these violences which always mark the weakness of an evil cause. Twice persecution constrained him to take refuge in the Thebaid, and three times an imperial order exiled him to the West. He became thus the natural link between the Fathers of the desert and those vast regions which their successors were to conquer and transform. Victor over Arianism by the strength of faith, courage, and patience alone, sustained by the popes against the emperors and bishops unfaithful to the divinity of Jesus, it be-

longed to him more than to any other to introduce the monastic institution to Rome, the head and centre of the Church, which could no longer remain a stranger to this new and wonderful development of Christian life. It was in 340 that he came for the first time to Rome, in order to escape the violence of the Arians, and invoke the protection of Pope Julius. This pope convoked the adversaries of the bishop of Alexandria to a council, from which they drew back, knowing that if they appeared, they should there encounter a truly ecclesiastical tribunal, where there should be neither count nor soldiers at the doors, nor orders of the emperor.[1]

He makes it known in Rome.

While the pope and the council did justice to the glorious defender of the divinity of Christ, he spread in Rome the first report of the life led by the monks in the Thebaid, of the marvellous exploits of Anthony, who was still alive, of the immense foundations which Pacome was at that time forming upon the banks of the higher Nile. He had brought with him two of the most austere of these monks. The one was Ammonius, so absorbed in the contemplation of divine things that he did not deign to visit any of the wonders of Rome, except the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul; the other, Isidore, gained all hearts by his amiable simplicity. These two served as guarantees of the truth of his tale, and as types to the Romans who might be tempted to follow their example. Monastic life, however, was not completely unknown in Rome. Traces of its existence are visible during the last persecutions, in the Acts of the martyrs: they have preserved to us the story of St. Aglae, a noble and rich Roman lady, who lived a luxurious and disorderly life with Boniface, the first among seventy-three intendants who aided her to govern her vast domains. After that guilty *liasion* had lasted several years, Aglae, moved by compunction, and having heard the Christians say that those who honored the holy martyrs should share their protection before the tribunal of God, sent Boniface to the East, to seek there the relics of some martyr, in order to build them an oratory. "Madame," said the intendant to his mistress, at his departure, "if my relics come to you under the name of a martyr, will you receive them?" She reproved that pleasantry, but it was a promise: he died a martyr at Tarsus, after cruel tortures, voluntarily undergone. His body was

341.

Aglae and Boniface.

209 or 305.

[1] Fleury, *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. xii. c. 20.

brought to Aglae, who received it with great and tender respect; and after having deposited it in a chapel, built at the distance of fifty stadia from Rome, she distributed all her goods to the poor, obtained thus the boon of a complete conversion, and took the veil as a nun, with some women who desired, like her, to devote themselves to penitence. She lived thus thirteen years in the retirement of the cloister; and after her sanctity had been manifested by more than one miracle, she died and was buried in the chapel of St. Boniface.[2]

At the peace of the Church, a daughter of Constantine had founded a first monastery of women above the tomb of St. Agnes, on the very site where, having won immortality in the memory of men by braving the judges and murderers of the empire, that young conqueror appeared, in the midst of an army of virgins, white and dazzling, to the weeping parents, to give them assurance of her eternal happiness.[3]

The narratives of Athanasius had, notwithstanding, all the effect of a revelation. They roused the hearts and imaginations of the Romans, and especially of the Roman women. The name of monk, to which popular prejudice seems already to have attached a kind of ignominy,[4] became immediately an honored and envied title. The impression produced at first by the exhortations of the illustrious exile, was extended and strengthened during the two other visits which he made to the Eternal City. Some time afterwards, on the death of St. Anthony, Athanasius, at the request of his disciples, wrote the life of the patriarch of the Thebaid; and this biography, circulating through all the West, immediately acquired there the popularity of a legend, and the authority of a confession of faith. Athanasius, to the eyes of all the western Christians, was the hero of the age and the oracle of the Church.

342, 349.

Athanasius writes the Life of St. Anthony.

[2] "Domina mea, sin vero meum corpus redierit in nomine martyris, suscipies illud? . . . Supervixit in habitu sanctimoniali." — Act. SS. Bolland., d. 14 Maii, p. 281–283. Compare Bulteau, *Hist. Monast. d'Orient*, addit., p. 910.

[3] "Vident in medio noctis silentio vigilantes exercitum virginum . . . Agnetem simili veste fulgentem, et ad dexteram ejus agnum nive candidiorem. . . . Perseveravit autem Constantia Augusta in virginitate, per quam multæ virgines nobiles et illustres et mediocres sacra velamina susceperunt." — S. Ambros., *Act S. Agn.*

[4] "Nulla eo tempore nobilium feminarum noverat Romæ propositum monachorum, nec audebat, propter rei novitatem, ignominiosum (ut tunc putabatur) et vile in populis nomen assumere." — S. Hieron., *Vit. S. Marcellæ*, c. 4.

His genius and courage had raised him to the pinnacle of glory. How much credit that glory would add to his tale, and to the instructions which flowed from it, is apparent. Under this narrative form, says St. Gregory of Nazianzus, he promulgated the laws of monastic life.[5]

The town and environs of Rome were soon full of monasteries, rapidly occupied by men distinguished alike by birth, fortune, and knowledge, who lived there in charity, sanctity, and freedom.[6] From Rome the new institution, already distinguished by the name of *religion*, or *religious life, par excellence*,[7] extended itself over all Italy. It was planted at the foot of the Alps by the influence of a great bishop, Eusebius of Vercelli, who had, like Athanasius, gloriously confessed the faith against the Arians, and who, exiled like him, had sought in the Thebaid the same models which the bishop of Alexandria had revealed to Rome. It is thus that the Arian persecution, and the exile of the confessors of the faith, carried afar and fructified the monastic seed. The history of this time might be summed up in the celebrated phrase of Tertullian, thus modified: "Exilium confessorum semen monachorum." Returned to Italy, Eusebius gave the first example, often imitated since, and always with success, of confiding to monks the care of the worship in his cathedral.[8] From the continent the new institution rapidly gained the isles of the Mediterranean, and even the rugged rocks of the Gorgon and of Capraja, where the monks, voluntarily exiled from the world, went to take the place of the criminals and political victims whom the emperors had been accustomed to banish thither. The monks of the Gorgon might one day be seen embarking and hastening to meet the relics of St. Julia, a noble virgin of Carthage, brought into slavery by the Vandals of Genseric, and afterwards martyred by the pagans at

Eusebius of Vercelli. 370.

354.

The monks of the isles.

[5] S. Greg. Nazianzus, *Orat.* 27 *in Laud S. Athan.* Compare Nicephor., lib. viii. c. 40.

[6] "Romæ plura monasteria cognovi, in quibus singuli . . . cæteris secum viventibus præerant Christiana caritate, sanctitate, et libertate viventibus." — S. August., *De Moribus Ecclesiæ*, c. 33. "Multi monachi sapientes, potentes, nobiles." — S. Hieron., Epist. 26, *ad Pammach.*

[7] From that time the name of *religion* was given to the monastic institution, and to the monks that of *religious*. "Unus in religionis, alius in sacerdotii nomen ascendit." — Eucher., *ad Valerian.*, ap. Bulteau, *Hist. de l'Ordre de St. Benoît*, i. 46.

[8] "Primus in Occidentis partibus in eadem Ecclesia eosdem monachos instituit esse, quos clericos, ut esset in ipsis viris contemptus rerum et accuratio levitarum." — *Breviar. Romanum, die* 16 *Decemb.*

Cape Corso, where her master, a Syrian merchant, had stopped to sacrifice. When they had possessed themselves of this treasure, they bore it away into their nest of rocks, flying over the waves with full sails, in their frail skiff, like birds of the sea.[9] The earth and the sea had to recognize new guests and new masters.

From that time, and during all the second half of the fourth century, there was a great and admirable movement towards spiritual and penitential life in Rome, and throughout Italy. The Spirit of God breathed upon souls. It was, above all, in the midst of the Roman nobility that the words of Athanasius fell like thunder, and inspired all hearts. These old patrician races, which founded Rome, which had governed her during all her period of splendor and liberty, and which overcame and conquered the world, had expiated for four centuries, under the atrocious yoke of the Cæsars, all that was most hard and selfish in the glory of their fathers. Cruelly humiliated, disgraced, and decimated during that long servitude, by the masters whom degenerate Rome had given herself, they found at last in Christian life, such as was practised by the monks, the dignity of sacrifice and the emancipation of the soul. These sons of the old Romans threw themselves into it with the magnanimous fire and persevering energy which had gained for their ancestors the empire of the world. "Formerly," says St. Jerome, "according to the testimony of the apostle, there were few rich, few noble, few powerful among the Christians. Now it is no longer so.[10] Not only among the Christians, but among the monks are to be found a multitude of the wise, the noble, and the rich."

Impulse of the Roman nobility towards monastic life.

They thus purified all that was too human in their wounded souls, by virtues unknown to their fathers — by humility, chastity, charity, scorn of self and tenderness for the misery of others, the love of a crucified God, whose image and rights were recalled by the poor, the sick, and the slave. All these divine novelties came to revive in these great hearts the masculine traditions of austerity, of abnegation, of sobriety and disinterestedness, which had shone like an aureole around the cradle of their ancient splendor. The monastic institution offered them a field of battle where the struggles and

[9] "In modum volucrum. . . . Vela plenis iter suum agerent." — RUINART, *Hist. Persec. Vandal*, p. 221.

[10] "Tunc rari sapientes, potentes, nobiles *Christiani:* nunc multi *monachi* sapientes, potentes, nobiles." — S. HIERON., Epist. 24, *De Obit. Paulinæ.*

victories of their ancestors could be renewed and surpassed for a loftier cause, and over enemies more redoubtable. The great men whose memory hovered still over degenerate Rome had contended only with men, and subjugated only their bodies: their descendants undertook to strive with devils, and to conquer souls.[11]

Even for their merely human glory, and the great names which crushed them by their weight, what better could the most superstitious votary of the worship of ancestors desire for them. Political power, temporal grandeur, aristocratic influence, were lost forever amid the universal debasement. God called them to be the ancestors of a new people, gave them a new empire to found, and permitted them to bury and transfigure the glory of their forefathers in the bosom of the spiritual regeneration of the old world.

These great names, which had disappeared from history amid the debasement of the empire, reappear thus to throw forth a last ray which should never grow dim, by identifying themselves with the inextinguishable splendors of the new law.

The Roman nobility then brought into Rome, and reproduced there, a brilliant example of the marvels of the Thebaid. The vast and sumptuous villas of the senators and consuls were changed into houses of retirement, almost in every point conformed to monasteries, where the descendants of the Scipios, the Gracchi, the Marcelli, the Camilli, the Anicii, led in solitude a life of sacrifice and charity. The bearers of these great names did not always shut themselves up in that retirement, but they dignified themselves with the title of monk, adopting the coarse dress, selling their goods, or bestowing them on the poor, lying down upon hard couches, fasting all their life, and keeping in the active ministrations of charity a rule as austere as that of the cloister.[12]

They were seen to mingle with the senatorial purple their mantle of coarse gray cloth, and to make plebeians of themselves in costume, trampling human respect under foot, which appeared then the most difficult of victories, for St. Jerome says, "Men have been known to resist torments, who yielded to shame. It is not a small thing for a man, noble, eloquent, and rich, to avoid in public places the society of the powerful, in order to mix among the crowd, to identify

[11] "Illi vicerunt corpora, . . . hæc subjugavit animas." — S. Hieron., Epist. 30.

[12] Champagny, op. cit., § 5, p. 336.

himself with the poor, to associate with peasants, and being a prince to make himself one of the people." [13]

But the metamorphosis which certain great ladies of Rome had undergone, was still more admirable. These women, hitherto so proud of their noble birth, and so refined in their delicacy, who, as St. Jerome says, could not proceed a step except carried in a litter by eunuchs, and who even then could not endure the inequalities of the ground which they had thus to traverse, who found the weight of a silken robe too heavy, and fled from the least ray of the sun as from a conflagration, are shortly to be seen devoting themselves to the hardest labors and the most repulsive cares.[14]

Noble ladies in the cloister.

The family Anicia.

Among the great houses which exemplified this Christian transformation of the Roman nobility, the family Anicia, which reckoned its descent back to the best times of the republic, and which seems to have been the richest and most powerful in Rome at the end of the fourth century, should be specially distinguished. It reckoned then among its members the famous Anicius Petronius Probus, who was prefect of the prætorium — that is to say, the first personage in the empire after the emperor, and whose son Petronius, was, according to some, a monk before he became bishop of Bologna.[15] It afterwards produced the two greatest personages of monastic history, St. Benedict and St. Gregory the Great; and already the two most illustrious doctors of the West, St. Jerome and St. Augustine, vied in celebrating the glory of a race, in which every man seemed born a consul, yet which had given a still greater number of virgins to the Church than of consuls to the republic.[16]

[13] "Inter purpuras senatorum fulva tunica pullatus incederet . . . quare non est parvum virum nobilem, virum disertum, virum locupletem potentium in plateis vitare comitatum, miscere se turbis, adhærere pauperibus, rusticis copulari, de principe vulgum fieri!" — S. Hieron., Epist. 26, *ad Pammach.*

[14] "Quæ eunuchorum manibus portabantur, et inæquale solum molestius transcendebant; quibus serica vestis oneri erat et solis calor incendium." — *Ibid.*

[15] Moehler, op. cit., p. 194. The Bollandists say nothing of it. — T. ii., 4 Octobris, p. 424 *et seq.*

[16] "Quis verbis explicet . . . quam incomparabiliter gloriosas atque fructuosas habeat ex vestro sanguine feminas virgines Christus, quam viros consules mundus?"— S. Augustin, Epist. 179, *De Convers. Demetriadis.* "Illustris Anicii sanguinis genus, in quo aut nullus, aut rarus est qui non meruerit consulatum." — S. Hieron., Epist. *ad Demetriadem*, c. 2.

This same race has inspired the poet Claudian with the following verses:—

"Quemcumque requires
Hac de stirpe virum, certum est de consule nasci.

Their enthusiasm had for its object a young nun of the same race, Demetrias, whose grandfather, brother, and two uncles were consuls from 371 to 406. After the conquest of Rome by the Goths, she took refuge in Africa with her mother Juliana and her grandmother Proba. While Proba sought to unite her to one of the young Roman nobles who were their companions in exile, the virgin Demetrias, inspired by a recollection of St. Agnes, threw aside all her ornaments, clothed herself in a coarse tunic, and a veil still coarser which concealed her face, and threw herself, in that attire, at the feet of her grandmother, explaining herself only by tears. After the first moment of surprise, the mother and grandmother applauded the sacrifice. The whole Church in Africa was touched by it, and the two greatest writers of the time have immortalized her in their letters. St. Augustin congratulated her mother and grandmother by one of his most eloquent epistles.[17] St. Jerome, blessing the voluntary victim, compared the effect of this news to that of the days when a victorious consul raised the hopes of the republic when cast down by some disaster. Demetrias.

A young widow, Marcella, whose name alone is enough to recall the best days of the republic, and whose rare beauty, enhanced by the long and illustrious line of her ancestors, drew around her numerous suitors,[18] was the first to receive the narratives of St. Athanasius, and put his instructions into practice. Afterwards, when St. Jerome came to Rome to renew those instructions and narratives by adding to them the example of his own life, Marcella, with her mother Albinia, and her sister Asella, placed herself at the head of that select number of illustrious matrons who took him as their guide and oracle. She astonished the holy doctor by her knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, she fatigued him by her thirst always to know more of them than he could Marcella.

> Per fasces numerantur avi semperque renata
> Nobilitate virent, et prolem fata sequuntur,
> Continuum simili servantia lege tenorem:
> Nec quisquam procerum tentas, licet ære vetusto
> Floreat, et claro cingatur Roma senatu,
> Se jactare parem, sed prima sede relicta
> Aucheniis, de jure licet certare secundo."
>
> *Paneg. de Prob. et Olybr. Consul.*

[17] *Epist.* 150.

[18] "Illustrem familiam, alti sanguinis decus, et stemmata per proconsules et præfectos prætorio decurrentia. . . . Propter ætatem et antiquitatem familiæ, et insignem, quod maxime viris placere consuevit, decorem corporis." — S. Hieron., Epist. 16, *ad Principiam*, c. 1.

teach her; she made him afraid to find in her a judge rather than a disciple.[19] In her palace on Mount Aventine, she collected, under the presidence of that giant of controversy, the most worthy among the Christians, and the most pious among the noble ladies, for mutual strengthening and enlightenment. After having thus first given to Rome the true model of a Christian widow, she passed the last thirty years of her life in her suburban villa transformed into a monastery, and there, in the absence of Jerome, during the troublesome contests which took place between him and Rufinus upon the doctrines of Origen, she became the support of orthodoxy in Rome, the adviser and auxiliary of Pope Anastasius.[20]

Furia. 394.

About the same time a Roman lady of the first nobility, Furia, whose name indicates her descent from the great Camillus, being left a widow young and without children, addressed herself to Jerome to ask his advice upon her condition, in which she desired to remain, in opposition to her father and her relatives, who urged her to marry again. He drew out for her a rule of life which should make her widowhood an apprenticeship to monastic life.[21] And shortly after, in the year 400, he had to conduct in the same path the young Salvina, daughter of the king of Mauritania and widow of Hebridius, the nephew of the Emperor Theodosius, a great friend of the monks and of the poor.[22] She became the model of widows at Rome and Constantinople.

St. Paula and her family. 347-401.

But the most illustrious of all is that Paula whose mother was directly descended from Paulus Emilius and the younger Scipio, whose father professed to trace his genealogy up to Agamemnon, and whose husband was of the race of Julius, and consequently of the line of Æneas.[23] The noblest blood of Rome flowed in the veins of these holy women, immortalized in Christian history

[19] "Cum Romæ essem, nunquam tam festina me vidit, ut non de Scripturis aliquid interrogaret. . . . Sagaci mente universa pensabat, ut me sentirem non tam discipulam habere quam judicem." — S. Hieron., *Præf. in Epist. Paul. ad Galat.* "Ita ut post perfectionem nostram, si de aliquo testimonio Scripturarum esset oborta contentio, ad illam judicem pergeretur." — *Ibid.*, Epist. 16, *ad Princip.*, c. 7.

[20] S. Hieron. Compare Baronius, *Ann.*, ad. an. 397.

[21] Fleury, lib. xix. c. 56.

[22] Hieron., Epist. *ad Salvinam.*

[23] "Gracchorum stirps, soboles Scipionum, Pauli hæres, cujus vocabulum trahit, Marciæ Papiriæ matris Africani vera et germana progenies. Per omnes fere Græcias usque hodie stemmatibus et divitiis ac nobilitate Agamemnonis ferunt sanguinem trahere. Toxotio qui Æneæ et Juliorum altissimum sanguinem trahit." — S. Hieron., Epist. 27, *ad Eustoch.*

by the genius of St. Jerome. Who does not know these daughters of St. Paula — Blesilla the widow, who died so young, so amiable, so learned, and so penitent, after having been married to a descendant of Camillus — and Eustochia the virgin, whom Jerome honored by dedicating to her the code of Christian virginity?[24] It is known that he afterwards addressed to Lœta, the step-daughter of Paula, the first treatise on the education of women which the Christian spirit had inspired, and which prepared for cloistral life the young Paula, devoted to the Lord from the cradle, and a nun, like her grandmother and her aunt. He offered, with the candor of genius, to educate her himself, and, "old as I am," said he, "I shall accustom myself to infantile lispings, more honored in this than Aristotle was, for I shall instruct, not a king of Macedonia destined to perish by the poison of Babylon, but a servant and spouse of Christ, to be presented to Him in the heavens."

Pammachius.

Paulina, the third of the daughters of Paula, was married to Pammachius, himself as noble by his consular birth as was his wife. Becoming a widower and heir of the great possessions of Paulina, he also embraced monastic life, and was worthy of being declared by Jerome the general-in-chief of Roman monks — "the first of monks in the first of cities."[25] "When he walks in the streets," adds the holy doctor, "he is accompanied by the poor whom Paulina had endowed and lodged in her house. He purifies his soul by contact with their mean garments. . . . Who should have believed that a last descendant of the consuls, an ornament of the race of Camillus, could make up his mind to traverse the city in the black robe of a monk, and should not blush to appear thus clad in the midst of the senators? It is thus that he, ambitious of the celestial consulate, wins the suffrages of the poor by gifts more powerful than games or spectacles. An illustrious man, eloquent and rich, he descends from the highest rank of the state to be the companion of the Roman populace. But before giving himself to Jesus Christ, his name was known only in the senate; ignored when he was rich, it is blessed to-day in all the churches of the universe."

[24] Epist. 22, *ad Eustochiam, de Custodia Virginitatis.*

[25] "Primus inter monachos in prima urbe, consulum pronepos et Furiani germinis decus. Et patris et conjugis nobilitate patritium. Nunc multi monachi sapientes, potentes, nobiles, quibus cunctis Pammachius meus sapientior, potentior, nobilior; magnus in magnis; primus in primis; *architrategos* monachorum." — S. Hieron., Epist. *ad Pammach.*

Pammachius, who thus consecrated his fortune and his days to the poor, was at once seconded and surpassed in his works of charity by a widow of a heart still more great than her name; this was Fabiola,[26] of that wonderful race of the Fabii, three hundred of whom fell in a single combat for Rome, and who saved the city by bestowing on her that great man against whom the arm of Hannibal could not prevail. Married to a frightful profligate, she had availed herself of the Roman law to repudiate him, and to unite herself to a more worthy husband; afterwards, enlightened by her faith, she expiated that fault by a public penitence in the Basilica of the Lateran, and consecrated her widowhood to a long and fruitful penance. She employed her immense wealth in the foundation of the first hospital which had yet been seen in Rome, where she collected the sick poor, gathered from the squares of the city, to serve and nourish them with her own hands, to bathe their sores and ulcers, from which others turned their eyes, to tend their diseased members, and to solace the agony of the dying.[27] She did this with so much tenderness and maternal feeling, that the healthful poor wished for sickness that they might become her patients. Her maternal generosity extended from the poor to the monks. She was not content with providing for the necessities of all the cenobites of both sexes at Rome and throughout Latium; she went in her own person, or by her messengers, to relieve the poverty of the monasteries hidden in the bays of the Mediterranean, and even in the isles, wherever, indeed, choirs of monks raised their pure and plaintive voices to heaven.

Fabiola.

Finally, in concert with Pammachius, and thus giving a prelude to one of the most permanent and universal glories of the monastic order, she built at the mouth of the Tiber[28] a hospice for the use of the pilgrims who already thronged to Rome; there she waited their arrival and departure, to lavish upon them her cares and her alms. The fame of her munificence soon resounded through all the Roman world; it was spoken of among the Britons, and remembered with

[26] See his life by St. Jerome, Epist. 30, *ad Oceanum*.

[27] "Prima omnium νοσοκομεῖον instituit, in quo ægrotantes colligeret de plateis, et consumpta languoribus atque inedia miserorum membra foveret. Quoties morbo regio et pædore confectos humeris suis ipsa portavit! quoties lavit purulentam vulnerum saniem, quam alius aspicere non valebat! Spirans cadaver sorbitiunculis irrigabat." — S. Hieron., loc. cit.

[28] At *Portu Romano*, now *Porto*, a ruined episcopal town, six miles from Ostia.

gratitude in Egypt and in Persia.[29] At the approach of death, she convoked by writing a multitude of Religious to distribute to them all that remained of her wealth. When this woman, who was called the solace of the monks,[30] slept in the Lord, all Rome celebrated her obsequies; the chant of psalms and Alleluiahs rose everywhere: the squares, the porticoes, the roofs of the houses, could not contain the crowd of spectators. "I hear from this distance," wrote St. Jerome at Bethlehem, "the thronging footsteps of those who precede her bier, and the waves of the multitude which accompany it. No, Camillus did not triumph so gloriously over the Gauls, nor Papirius over the Samnites, nor Scipio over Numantium, nor Pompey over Mithridates; the pomp of all these victors is not equal to the glory of this courageous penitent."[31] And he spoke with justice, for she had inaugurated in the world, between the disgrace of the Roman empire and the miseries of the barbarian invasion, a glory unknown to the past; she had created that charity which gives more than bread, more than gold — the charity which gives the man himself — the charity of the monk and of the nun.

In the country of Lucretia and Portia, too long stained by the Livias and Messalinas, these Christian heroines completed Roman history and opened the annals of the monastic order; they bequeathed to it types of chastity, charity, and austerity, which nothing had then equalled, and which nothing has since surpassed. Monasteries of men and women multiplied around them in Rome, where each prepared himself by prayer, fasting, and abstinence, for the formidable crises of the future, and where the last scions of the old and invincible Romans waited the coming of the barbarians. When Rome was taken and sacked for the first time by the Goths in 410, the soldiers of Alaric, penetrating into the eternal city, found Marcella calm and intrepid in her monastic palace on Mount Aventine, as the Gauls of Brennus eight centuries before had found the Roman senators waiting death in silence on their chairs of ivory, like gods, according to Livy. They demanded gold

Marcella at the sack of Rome by the Goths.

[29] "Xendochium imperio Romano suum totus pariter mundus audivit: sub una æstate didicit Britannia quod Ægyptus et Parthus noverant vere." — S. Hieron., loc. cit.

[30] "Solatium monachorum." — *Ibid.*

[31] "Audio præcedentium turmas. . . . Non sic Furius de Gallis, non Papirius de Samnitibus. . . . Favebant sibi omnes in gloria pœnitentis." — *Ibid.* Fabiola died in 399.

from that venerable mother of Roman monasteries; they refused to believe in the voluntary poverty which her coarse tunic attested; they struck her down with sticks and whips.[32] She submitted patiently to these outrages, but prostrated herself before the barbarians to ask mercy for the modesty of the young nun[33] who was her companion. This was in a manner to attempt an impossibility: these ferocious beasts, as St. Jerome says, who periodically invaded the empire, delighted in taking as the playthings of their savage lust the delicate forms of noble Roman ladies, of free women and consecrated virgins. However, she triumphed by her prayers and tears over their licentiousness. These obscure barbarians renewed the sacrifice which has immortalized the younger Scipio; and Marcella, taking refuge with her whom she had saved at the tomb of St. Paul, died as if buried under that supreme and difficult victory.

St. Jerome spiritual guide and historian of the noble nuns.

340-420.

All these holy and generous women have been revealed to us by the man of genius, who was their contemporary, their biographer, and their oracle. For forty years St. Jerome, first at Rome, then at Bethlehem, instructed, governed, inspired, and attracted them to the highest possessions. He admired them more, perhaps, than he had been admired by them, and he desired that posterity should share this admiration: he has succeeded by bequeathing to it these narratives, distinguished by his impetuous energy and ardent emotion, which the Church has adopted, and which form one of the finest pages of her annals.

Monastic history claims the glory of St. Jerome — of that lion of Christian polemics, at once inspired and subdued; inspired by zeal, and subdued by penitence. We must not attempt to retrace here all the life of this great doctor, who, born in Dalmatia,[34] carried successively to Rome, Gaul, and Constantinople, the almost savage impetuosity of his temper, the ardor of his faith, the indefatigable activity of his mind, the immense resources of his knowledge, and that inexhausti-

[32] "Marcellæ quoque domum cruentus victor ingreditur. . . . Intrepido vultu excepisse dicitur introgressos. . . . Cæsam fustibus flagellisque." — S. Hieron., Epist. 16, *ad Principiam*.

[33] "Ne sustineret adolescentia quod senilis ætas timere non poterat." — S. Hieron., loc. cit. "Quot matronæ, quot virgines Dei et ingenua nobiliaque corpora his belluis fuere ludibrio!" — *Ibid.*, Epist. 35.

[34] According to some, in 331; to others, in 340 or 346. The last date appears the most correct. See the excellent *Histoire de S. Jérôme* by M. Collombet. Lyons, 1844.

ble vehemence, which sometimes degenerated into emphasis and affectation, but which most frequently attained to true eloquence. That which specially interests us is the monk, the hermit, who, coming from the West, attempted to lead back the monastic current to its source in the East, and who would perhaps have succeeded in regenerating for long ages the monks of the East, if God had permitted him to instil into them the courage and energy which he had brought from the depths of his mountains. Drawn towards solitude by a passionate attraction, and by the desire for salvation which possessed him, he fled the vices and voluptuousness of Rome; he sought an asylum in Syria among the numerous anchorites who made that country the rival of monastic Egypt. He made a sort of citadel for himself in the burning desert of Chalcis, upon the confines of Arabia. There he buried himself in the study of Hebrew and Chaldean, and prepared himself to become the commentator and translator of the Holy Scriptures. He joined to this the cultivation of ancient literature, and of his favorite author Cicero, but so eagerly that he took fright and vowed to renounce it, under the impression of a remarkable dream, forgotten afterwards, as was also his rash engagement, to the great profit of his genius and our edification, for none has ever evoked more appropriately and majestically the great recollections of classic antiquity.[35] Other visions, still more menacing, troubled him in the midst of the prayers, the austerities, and the excessive fasts which he imposed upon himself for the love of his soul; he was pursued with the remembrance of the delights of Rome, and of its choirs of young girls, who came to people his cell, and to make it an accomplice of his own burning imagination;[36] but soon the blessed influence of solitude, inhabited for God, triumphed over those apparitions of the past. He felt himself sufficiently strong, sufficiently reassured,

[35] He wrote a narrative of this dream, which he entitled *History of my Misfortune.* See COLLOMBET, i. c. 7, and ii. c. 1, on the subject of the classical studies of Jerome, which he did not hesitate to continue in spite of this warning, and for which he is reproached so severely by his antagonist Rufinus. He remembered his dream and promise so little, that he made the monks copy the dialogues of Cicero, explained Virgil at Bethlehem, and answered to the accusations of Rufinus, that, after all, this was only a question of a dream. "*He who upbraids me with a dream, I refer to the prophets, who teach that dreams are vain and not worthy of faith.*" — *Contr. Rufin*, i. 30, quoted by OZANAM, *Civilisation au* v^e *Siècle*, i. 301, where this whole subject is fully discussed.

[36] "Ipsam quoque cellulam meam, quasi cogitationum mearum consciam, pertimescebam." — Epist. 22, *ad Eustochiam.*

to call to the end of his retirement a friend of his youth, whose salvation was dear to him. He cried to him across the seas, "O desert enamelled with the flowers of Christ! O solitude, where those stones are born of which, in the Apocalypse, is built the city of the Great King! O retreat which rejoicest in the friendship of God! What doest thou in the world, my brother, with thy soul greater than the world? How long wilt thou remain in the shadow of roofs, and in the smoky dungeon of cities? Believe me, I see here more of the light." [37]

After having enjoyed that light for five years, he was driven from his dear solitude by the calumnious accusations, which his character as a man of the West excited around him. He took refuge successively in Jerusalem; at Antioch, where he was ordained priest, but on condition of not being attached to any church, and of continuing to live as a monk; in Constantinople, whither he was drawn by the fame of St. Gregory of Nazianzus; in Rome, where he was secretary to the great pope Damasus; and in Alexandria, from whence he went to visit the hermits of the Thebaid. Finally, in 385, he returned, not to leave it again, to the Holy Land, and settled at Bethlehem, where he built for himself a little monastery with a hospice for pilgrims.[38] There, in a poor and narrow cell, eager to receive the inspirations of faith near the manger of the Saviour, and faithful above all to the law of labor, which he regarded as the foundation of monastic life, this glorious cenobite accomplished the translation and commentary of the Scriptures. He produced thus that Vulgate which has made him "the master of Christian prose for all following ages." [39] He joined to that great work the education of some little children, whom he instructed in humane letters. He received there with hospitality the monks whom his renown drew from all the corners of the world, and who overwhelmed him by their visits,[40] and the remains of the Roman nobility who, ruined by the sack of Rome, fled to

[37] "O desertum floribus Christi vernans! . . . O domus familiarius Deo gaudens!" — Epist. 1, *ad Heliod.*

[38] "Apud Bethleem degens, ubi et monasterium sibi condidit." — Marcellini *Chronic.*, an 392. "Nos in ista provincia ædificato monasterio et diversorio propter exstructo." — Epist. 26, *ad Pammach.* He afterwards inhabited and ruled the monastery which St. Paula had built at Bethlehem.

[39] Ozanam, *Civilisation au* v^e *Siècle*, ii. p. 100. See also his admirable 15th lesson, entitled *Comment la Langue Latine devint Chrétienne*, one of the finest passages of this masterpiece of our Catholic history.

[40] "Tantis de toto orbe confluentibus obruimur turbis monachorum." — Epist. 26, *ad Pammach.*

Bethlehem to seek food and shelter from him. He continued there the bold warfare which he had waged all his life against the errors and disorders with which he saw the Church infected, and which raised such violent enmities against him. A severe outbreak of this emnity came upon him towards the end of his days, when the Pelagians, to avenge his attacks against their chief who issued his dogmas at Jerusalem came to besiege, plunder, and burn the communities directed by Jerome, who only escaped by taking refuge in a fortified tower.[41]

During his sojourn in Rome, he had spread the love for monastic life with as much zeal as success. At Bethlehem he continued that apostolic office, and led back from the bosom of Italy numerous and illustrious recruits, who gave their all for the benefit of the poor of Christ, and whom he enrolled in the monastic legions. He pursued strictly those who resisted, or turned back at the last moment. He writes to Julian: "Thou hast given thy goods to many poor, but there are many more still to whom thou hast not given. The riches of Crœsus would not suffice for the solacement of those who suffer. Thou protectest the monks, thou makest gifts to the churches, thou puttest thyself at the service of the saints; one thing only remains for thee to do: it is to change thy life, and henceforth to be a saint among the saints." [42]

He points out the errors of the false monks.

But his admiration for monastic life did not blind him to the vices and abuses which already appeared among the cenobites. No one has denounced, no one has branded, more energetically than he, the false monks, the false penitents, the false widows and virgins. He points out with a bold hand all the faults and dangers of the institution: sometimes the black melancholy, degenerating into hypochondria, which followed an excess of reading or immoderate fasts, and which was more adapted to receive the help of medicine than the instructions of penitence; [43] sometimes the pomp and luxury which disguised themselves under the cloak of the solitary, without giving up the dainties of the table, the vessels of gold, and the delicate glass, the herd of boon-companions and attendants; [44] or, again, the hypocrisy which worked upon the credulous piety of nobles

[41] S. August., *de Gestis Pelag.* [42] Epist. 34, *ad Julian.*

[43] "Vertuntur in melancholiam, et Hippocratis magis fomentis quam nostris monitis indigent." — Epist. 225 (al. 7), *ad Rusticum;* 130 (al. 8), *ad Demetriadem.*

[44] "Ex vitro et patella fictili aurum comeditur, et inter turbas et examina ministrorum nomen sibi vindicant solitarii." — Epist. 225 (al. 4), *ad Rusticum.*

and of women;[45] but especially the pride, which emboldened so-called converts to judge their brothers who remained in the world, to disdain even the bishops, and to come out of their cells in order to wander about the towns, and annoy, under a false air of modesty, the passers by in public places.[46]

He begins to collect the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.*

This legitimate severity inspired him with all the more lively an admiration for the first great founders of monastic life, whose traditions he had collected, and whose atmosphere he had breathed in Egypt. He undertook to write the lives of some of the most illustrious — of Paul, of Hilarion, of the solitary Malchus, whom he had known and heard in Syria; he added to these the biographies of the illustrious Roman women who, a century later, had renewed even in the bosom of Rome marvels worthy of the Thebaid. "These are," said he, with a pride, in which the echo of warlike and literary ambition seems to resound — "these are our models and our leaders. Every profession has its models. Let the Roman generals imitate Regulus and Scipio; let the philosophers follow Pythagoras and Socrates; the poets Homer; the orators, Lysias and the Gracchi: but for us, let our models and our chiefs be the Pauls and the Anthonys, the Hilarions and the Macarii."[47] Then, making a noble return upon himself, he terminates thus one of his finest narratives: "I conjure thee, whoever thou mayst be, who readest this, to remember the sinner Jerome, who would much rather choose, if God gave him the option, the tunic of Paul with his merits, than the purple and the empire of kings with their torments."[48]

Such lessons, supported by his glorious example, sufficed, and more than sufficed, to make that father of the West in his Eastern refuge the head and oracle of the cenobites of his time. Disciples therefore gathered round him in a crowd, and when he died an octogenarian, in 420, he could leave directions that he was to be buried beside the noble Paula[49] and her daughter Eustochia,[50] who had come to live and die near him and the humble sanctuary where the Saviour of men was born.

[45] Epist. 18 (al. 22), *ad Eustochiam.*

[46] Epist. 15 (al. 77), *ad Marcum;* 95 (al. 4), *ad Rusticum.*

[47] "Habet unumquodque propositum principes suos. Romani duces imitentur Camillos, Fabricios, Regulos, Scipiones. Philosophi proponant sibi Pythagoram, Socratem, Platonem, Aristotelem; poetæ Homerum, etc.; oratores Lysiam, Gracchos, etc. Nos autem habeamus propositi nostri principes Paulos et Antonios, Julianos, Hilarionem, Macarios."

[48] "Tunicam Pauli cum meritis ejus, quam regum purpuram cum pœnis suis (*al.* cum regnis suis)."

[49] Died in 404.

[50] Died in 419.

Roman emigration into Palestine.

Jerome had been the leader of that permanent emigration which, during the last years of the fourth century, drew so many noble Romans and Christians of the West towards Palestine and Egypt. In proportion as souls were more penetrated with the truths of the faith, and gave themselves to the practice of Christian virtues, they experienced an attraction more and more irresistible towards the countries which were at once the cradle of the Christian religion and of monastic life. Then were seen beginning those pilgrimages which ended in the Crusades, which ceased only with the decline of faith, and which have been replaced by explorations too often inspired by the love of gain or by frivolous curiosity. Two great interests then moved the hearts of Christians, led them from their homes, and threw them into the midst of the difficulties, perils, and tediousness, now incomprehensible, of a journey to the East. They would kiss the footsteps of the Lord Jesus upon the very soil where He had encountered life and death for our salvation; they would also survey and see with their own eyes those deserts, caverns, and rocks, where still lived the men who seemed to reach nearest to Christ by their supernatural austerity, and their brave obedience to the most difficult precepts of the Saviour.

St. Paula, her daughter, and her granddaughter, at Bethlehem.

The illustrious Paula, still young, and attached to Italy by the most legitimate and tender ties, hastened to follow in the steps of St. Jerome,[51] in order to visit the solitude which the Pauls and Anthonys had sanctified.[52] She left her country, her family, even her children,[53] and, accompanied by her daughter Eustochia, crossed the Mediterranean, disembarked in Syria, went over the Holy Land, and all the places named in Scripture, with an unwearied ardor: then descended into Egypt, and, penetrating into the desert of Nitria, into the cells of the holy hermits, she prostrated herself at their feet, consulted them, admired them, and withdrew with reluctance from these blessed regions to return into Palestine. She established herself in Bethlehem, and founded there two monasteries, one for men, which Jerome seems to have governed; the other, very numerous, for women, where she secluded herself with her daughter and a multitude of virgins of various

[51] Melania had preceded her in 372, but it is not apparent that the exhortations of Jerome had induced her to make this journey.

[52] "Ad eremum Paulorum atque Antoniorum pergere gestiebat." — Epist. 27, *ad Eustochiam*.

[53] "Nesciebat se matrem, ut Christi probaret ancillam." — *Ibid.*

conditions and countries. Both ended their days there, as also did the young Paula, who came to rejoin her grandmother and aunt, to live and die near the tomb of Jesus Christ, and thus to justify the tender solicitude with which St. Jerome had surrounded her cradle. The grandmother held there, as did her daughter, the office of sweeper and cook, and the care of the lamps,[54] which did not hinder them from taking up again with perseverance their former Greek and Hebrew studies. The Vulgate was undertaken by St. Jerome to satisfy the ardor of these two women, to enlighten their doubts, and guide their researches. It was to them that he dedicated his work, and he took them for judges of the exactness of his labor.[55] In this convent study was imposed upon the nuns, and each had to learn every day a portion of the Holy Scripture. But more than study, more even than penitence, charity governed all the thoughts and actions of this generous Roman. She lavished her patrimony in alms: she never refused a poor person: Jerome himself felt obliged to reprove her for her prodigality, and preach to her a certain prudence.[56] "I have but one desire," she answered him, with the same passion of charity which afterwards burned in St. Elizabeth; "it is to die a beggar, it is to leave not a mite to my daughter, and to be buried in a shroud which does not belong to me. If I am reduced to beg," she added, "I shall find many people who will give to me, but if the mendicant who begs from me obtains nothing and dies of want, who but me shall be answerable for his soul?" Accordingly, when she died, she left to her daughter not an obolus, says Jerome, but on the contrary a mass of debts, and, which was worse, an immense crowd of brothers and sisters whom it was difficult to feed, and whom it would have been impious to send away.[57] In reality, though she allowed herself to be advised and blamed for her exorbitant almsgiving, she knew well that he would understand her, who had stripped himself of all, and who afterwards sent his brother Paulinian into his own country, into Dalmatia, to sell the possessions of the

[54] "Vel lucernas concinnant, vel succendunt focum, pavimenta verrunt, mundant legumina . . . apponunt mensas, calices porrigunt effundunt cibos. . . ." — Epist. 26, *ad Pammach.*

[55] Epist. 92, *ad Paul. et Rust.* Compare OZANAM, ii. 101.

[56] "Fateor errorem meum; cum in largiendo esset propitior, arguebam. . . . Hoc habere voti, ut mendicans ipsa moreretur, ut unum nummum filiæ non dimitteret. . . ." — *Ibid.*

[57] "Ne unum quidem hominum, sed . . . fratrum et sororum immensam multitudinem, quos sustentare arduum et abjicere impium est."

family there, and make as much money of them as he could, in order to relieve the poverty to which the monasteries of Bethlehem were reduced.

However, it is pleasant to know that these austere Christians, these Romans so boldly courageous against themselves, preserved in their hearts an abundant vein of tenderness, and attached themselves with ardor to those ties which they believed it possible to retain in giving themselves to God. Maternal and filial love still overflowed their intrepid hearts. At the funeral of Blesilla, her eldest daughter, Paula could not restrain her grief, and fell fainting: her life was supposed in danger. Jerome, in an eloquent letter, had to use all his authority to lead her to resignation to the will of the Most High, showing her that the excess of her grief was a scandal in the eyes of the pagans, a dishonor to the Church and the monastic condition. When Paula died, twenty years later, in her convent of Bethlehem, Eustochia, after having lavished the most minute and indefatigable cares upon her during her last illness, hastened from her mother's deathbed to the grotto where the Saviour was born, to obtain of God, by tears and prayers, that He would permit her to die at the same time, and be buried in the same coffin. Then, as they bore that holy woman to her tomb, she threw herself upon the body of her mother, kissing her eyes, clasping her in her arms, and crying out that she would be interred with her.[58] Once more St. Jerome had to repress that weakness, and separate the orphan nun from the holy remains, to place them in the tomb which he had hollowed out of a rock beside the grotto of the Nativity, and upon which he carved these words: "Here reposes the daughter of the Scipios, and of Paulus Emilius, the descendant of the Gracchi and of Agamemnon, Paula, the first of the Roman senate; she left her family and Rome her country, her fortune and her children, to live poor at Bethlehem, near Thy cradle, O Christ! where the Magi honored in Thee the man and the God."[59]

[58] "Ipsa flabellum tenere . . . pulvillum supponere, fricare pedes, aquam calidam temperare . . . omnium ancillarum prævenire officia. . . . Quibus precibus . . . inter jacentem matrem et specum Domini discurrit . . . ut eodem feretro portaretur. . . . Quasi ablactata super matrem suam, abstrahi a parente non potuit; deosculari oculos . . . et se cum matre velle sepeliri." —HIERON., Epist. 27, *ad Eustoch.*

[59] "Scipio quam genuit, Pauli fudere parentes,
Gracchorum soboles. . . .
Romani prima senatus,
Pauperiem Christi et Bethlemica rura secuta est. . . ."
HIERON., Epist. 27, *ad Eustoch.*

The noble Fabiola, whose liberality towards the poor in Rome we have already recorded, had also come to Jerusalem and to Bethlehem, and was there with St. Jerome and St. Paulo. But she did not remain there. The fear of the invasion of the Huns recalled her to Rome. Marcella, who survived all these holy women, although their elder both in age and conversion, had not yielded to the eloquent tenderness of the appeal which Jerome addressed to her,[60] in the name of Paula and her daughter. "Leave," they said to her, "that Rome where everything is adverse to the vocation and peace of a nun. Here, on the contrary, in this country of Christ, all is simplicity, all is silence. Wherever you go, the husbandman, leaning on his plough, murmurs the praises of God; the reaper refreshes himself by the chant of psalms, and the vintager, in cutting his vine, repeats the songs of David. These are the love-songs of this country, the melodies of the shepherd, the accompaniment of the laborer." [61]

The two Melanias.

Melania the elder.

347-409.

But, about the same period, another woman, illustrious and holy, issued from another branch of the family of Marcellus, Melania the elder, daughter of a consul, mother of a prætor, celebrated in all the Church for her shining virtue and devotion to the monks, became the stem of a numerous line of holy souls, belonging at once to the monastic life and to the first nobility of Rome.[62] Under her direction another monastic colony rose at Jerusalem, rivalling by its devotion and charity that which Jerome and Paula directed at Bethlehem.

Left a widow at twenty-two, having lost in the space of a year her husband and two of her sons, and having only one little child, whom she confided to Christian hands, Melania left Rome and sailed towards Egypt, to console her grief and warm her faith by the marvellous spectacle of the life led by the solitaries who seemed already to live with the angels. It was in 372, the last year of the life of St. Athanasius.[63] Melania, at her landing, saw the great bishop of Alexandria,

[60] After the death of her mother Albina, about 388.

[61] Translation of M. Villemain, *Tableau de l'Eloquence Chrétienne au* IV^e^ *Siècle.*

[62] "Melania nobilissima Romanorum mulier." — S. Hieronym., *Chron.* Compare Rosweyde, *Not. in Prælud. lib.* ii. *Vit. Patrum.* Melania, born at soonest in 347 (Rosweyde, p. 441), was, according to St. Paulinus, granddaughter of Marcellinus, consul in 341; according to St. Jerome, she was his daughter.

[63] This was also the year of St. Jerome's first pilgrimage into Egypt. — Rosweyde, *Prælud. in lib.* ii.

and received from his hands a relic of the Thebaid, a sheepskin which he himself had received from the holy abbot Macarius. She penetrated afterwards into the desert of Nitria and of Scete, and passed nearly six months in receiving the lessons and studying the austerities of the solitaries who dwelt there. The bishop Palladius and the priest Rufinus, who met her there, have left to us the most fascinating narrative of her pilgrimages in these holy solitudes.[64] At the death of Athanasius, the Arians, sure of the support of the Emperor Valens, raised against the orthodox one of the most atrocious persecutions which history has recorded. The monks, as has been already said, were its principal victims. Melania, who had already braved the interdict of the emperor by landing in Egypt,[65] put her life and her fortune at the service of the confessors of the true doctrine. She concealed some from the search of the executioners; she encouraged others to appear before the tribunal of the persecuting magistrates, where she accompanied them, where she was herself cited as a rebel against the divine emperor, but where her courage triumphed over the confounded judges. For three days she provided, at her own expense, for the five thousand monks whom she found in Nitria.[66] A great number of orthodox bishops and monks having been banished to Palestine, she followed them; and this noble woman might be seen in the evening, disguised under the coarse mantle of a servant,[67] carrying to the prisoners the assistance they needed. The consular magistrate of Palestine, not knowing who she was, arrested her in the hope of a great ransom. Upon this she resumed all the pride of her race, and invoked, like St. Paul, her rights as a Roman. "I am," she said to him, "the daughter of a consul; I have been the wife of a man illustrious in his generation; — now I am the servant of Christ. Despise me not because of my mean dress, for I can attain a higher rank if I will; and I have sufficient credit to keep me from fearing you, and to hinder you from touching my goods. But lest you should do wrong by ignorance, I have thought it right to let you know who I am." And she added, "We must know how to make head against fools, setting our pride

Her journey in the Thebaid.

[64] *De Vitis Patrum*, lib. ii., auct. Rufin., Aquileiensi presbyt., et lib. viii., auct. Pallad., Helenopol. episc.

[65] Palladius, op. cit., p. 772.

[66] "Tempore Valentis, quando Ecclesiam Dei vivi furor Arianorum, rege ipso impietatis satellite." — S. Paulin., Epist. 10; Rosweyde, pp. 427, 442.

[67] "Induta servili caracalla." — Pallad., loc. cit. 773.

against their insolence, as we loose a hound or a falcon against the deer." [68] The terrified magistrate offered excuses and homage,[69] and left her all liberty to communicate with the exiles.

She establishes herself at Jerusalem.

Piety retained her in the Holy Land, whither she had been drawn by her generous sympathy for the defenders of the faith. She established herself at Jerusalem, and built a monastery there, where she collected fifty virgins. For twenty-five [70] years she devoted to the relief of the poor, and the entertainment of the bishops, monks, and pilgrims of every condition, who came in multitudes to these holy places, her own services, and the revenues which her son sent to her from Rome. She was guided and seconded by the celebrated priest Rufinus, who inhabited a cell on the Mount of Olives, and who was at that period the old and tender friend of Jerome. A dispute afterwards took place between Rufinus and Jerome, occasioned by the doctrines of Origen: their rupture long agitated the Church, and drew from them melancholy invectives against each other. Melania succeeded in bringing about a public and solemn reconciliation between them, but it was not lasting.[71]

Melania the younger.

380-439.

In the mean time, the only son whom Melania had left in Rome, and who had become prætor, had married Albina, the sister of Volusian, prefect of the city, one of the most noble personages of the time. He had one daughter, named Melania, like her grandmother, who had been married at a very early age to Pinianus, the son of a governor of Italy and Africa, and descendant of Valerius Publicola, the great consul of the first year of the Roman republic. But the inclination of this young woman drew her rather towards penitence and solitary life than to the pomps of Roman decadence. Melania the elder, desirous of aiding her to walk courageously in the way of salvation, left Jerusalem to join her in Rome. She landed at Naples, in the end

[68] "Quænam sim tibi declaravi. Oportet enim adversus stolidos, tanquam cane et accipitre uti animi elatione." — *Ibid.*

[69] "Adoravit eam." — *Ibid.*

[70] Palladius says for *thirty-seven years*, but this number seems to us difficult to reconcile with the latter events in the life of Melania, at least under the supposition that she returned to live at Jerusalem between her journey to Rome in 397 with Rufinus, and her last departure from that city with Melania the younger in 409.

[71] An examination into the accusations of heresy brought against Rufinus, and consequently against the illustrious Melania, may be dispensed with. Father Rosweyde has entered into them with a violence which does not seem to have been approved by the most trustworthy historians.

of the year 398, and immediately there came to meet her, with her children, a crowd of Roman senators and nobles, who made the Appian Way resound with their luxurious carriages, their caparisoned horses, and gilded chariots. She rode amongst them, mounted upon a sorry horse, of no more value than an ass,[72] and clothed with a coarse tunic of rushes, woven like a mat. She added by this manifest humility to the great reputation which she enjoyed everywhere.

St. Paulinus de Nola. 353-431.

She stopped at Nola to visit a saint who was her relative and emulator. Paulinus,[73] born at Bordeaux, counted among his ancestors a long succession of senators; he had himself been consul under the Emperor Gratianus; his wealth was immense; he was the friend of the poet Ausonius, and himself a poet; he had married a very rich Spaniard, who was the first to bear the predestined name of Theresa. The husband and wife had mutually excited and drawn each other towards retirement and mortification. Ausonius endeavored in vain to retain his friend in the world, and to put him in opposition to his wife. From year to year their life became more rigid; they retired to a little estate near Barcelona; there they lost their only son. Then Paulinus lived with his wife as with a sister, left the senate and the world, solemnly changed his dress in the Church of Barcelona, distributed all his wealth to the poor, and buried himself in a small inheritance which he had reserved at Nola, in Campania, near the tomb of the martyr Felix, of which he constituted himself the guardian. This Roman consul, who had become the watchman of the relics of a martyr,[74] lived as poorly with his Theresa as the poorest and most austere monks; but he continued, according to the advice of St. Jerome, to cultivate eloquence and poetry, consecrating them to sacred subjects, and also his former friendship. "The last moment," wrote he to Ausonius, "which shall free me from this earth, shall not take away the tenderness I have for thee; for this soul which survives our destroyed organs, and sustains itself by its celestial origin, must needs preserve its affections, as it keeps its existence.

[72] "Macro et viliore asellis burrico . . . circumflui senatores . . . carrucis nutantibus, phaleratis equis, auratis pilentis et carpentis pluribus, gemente Appia atque fulgente . . . Crassam illam veluti spartei staminis tunicam." — S. Paulin., Epist. 29 (al. 10).

[73] Born in 353, consul in 378, bishop of Nola in 409, died in 431. See the charming passage in which Ozanam depicts the life and works of Paulinus in his *Civilisation au v^e Siècle*, lesson xviii.

[74] Rohrbacher, *Hist. de l'Eglise*, lib. xxxvii. p. 334.

Full of life and of memory, it can no more forget than it can die." [75] Many Christians joined him, and inhabited cells adjoining his, so that they formed a company of monks, subject to a rule of their own.

Melania bestowed upon Paulinus and Theresa a portion of the wood of the true cross, which she had from the bishop of Jerusalem, and then pursued her route towards Rome, where she was received with universal respect and admiration. She remained there several years, always occupied in extending among her own family and around her the love of monastic life, exhorting all who approached her to leave the world, to sell their goods, and follow her into solitude. She first won the husband of her niece, Apronianus, a patrician of the rank of *clarissimus*, who was still a pagan; she converted him not only to the Christian faith, but to monastic life, and his wife Avita at the same time. She confirmed her granddaughter, Melania the younger, already the mother of two children whom she had lost, and still only twenty, in the resolution of keeping continence with her husband.

The barbarians, who year by year closed around Rome their circle of fire and sword, and who shortly were to scale the sacred walls, could now be heard approaching. These presentiments of the ruin of the empire seconded and completed the work and exhortations of the illustrious nun. She urged her relatives and fellow-citizens to throw their wealth into the lap of God and the poor, rather than leave it a prey to the rapacity of the barbarians. At last, in 409, a year before the conquest of Rome by Alaric, all that holy and noble tribe began their march towards the desert. But in the first place the younger Melania, heiress of so many opulent lines, enfranchised her eight thousand slaves, and distributed to the churches, to the hospitals, to the monasteries, and to the poor, all the vast domains which she possessed in Spain and in Aquitaine, in the Tarraconaise, among the Gauls; she reserved to herself those in Campania, Sicily, and Africa, only to serve for future liberalities. She then sent immense sums even to Palestine and the Thebaid by the hands of a Dalmatian priest. It was so much saved from the enemy, so much snatched from the claws of the barbarian lion.[76] Afterwards they embarked. Melania the elder, who led this

Departure of the two Melanias, and all their house, for the desert.

409.

[75] S. Paulin., *Carmina*, x. 18.

[76] "Ex ore leonis Alarici eripiens fide sua." — Pallad., *Hist. Lausiaca*, c. 19.

triumph of the new faith at the moment when antique Rome was falling, drew with her all her descendants, her son Publicola, her daughter Albina, her granddaughter Melania the younger, with Pinianus her husband, and a multitude of others. They went first to Sicily, and from thence to Africa, where St. Augustine awaited them.

Melania the elder, after having seen the death of her son, and wept for him as a Christian mother should weep,[77] left the rest of her family to return to her convent at Jerusalem, where she died forty days after her return.

Melania the younger became then, in a manner, the head of the monastic caravan. From Carthage, where they had landed, they came to Tagaste, where Alypius, the celebrated friend of St. Augustine, was bishop; and from Tagaste to Hippo, where Augustine himself received them with tender and respectful cordiality. The people of that town, who were accustomed to impose vocations, and who had thus won St. Augustine, desired to seize the husband of Melania to ordain him a priest by force, in the hope of winning thus to their church and their poor the wealth which the husband and wife distributed with profusion. There was a complete riot on this account, of which St. Augustine has left us the record, and which he could not appease, although he threatened the rioters that he would cease to be their bishop if they persisted in using violence to the stranger. The multitude would only be calmed by a promise that if Pinianus ever consented to enter among the clergy, it should only be in the Church of Hippo.[78] Going back to Tagaste, Melania and Pinianus founded two monasteries, the one of eighty monks, the other of a hundred and thirty nuns; they lived there seven years in extreme poverty. Melania gained her living by transcribing manuscripts, which she did with equal skill and rapidity,[79] while her husband cultivated a garden. Afterwards they went together to Egypt to honor and succor with their alms the solitaries of Nitria and its environs. At last they arrived at Jerusalem and there separated. Pinianus, the former prefect of Rome, pursued his occupation of gardener in company with thirty other monks.[80] Melania, who had not yet attained the age of thirty, became

[77] "Taciturno quidem luctu, non tamen sicco a maternis lacrymis dolore." — S. Paulin., ap. *August.*, Epist. 249.

[78] S. August., Epist. 225.

[79] "Scribebat et celeriter et pulchre, citra errorem."

[80] Pallad., *Hist. Lausiaca*, c. 121.

a recluse in a cell upon the Mount of Olives, where she remained fourteen years; she afterwards built a church and monastery for ninety penitents, upon one of the sites where our Lord rested when bearing His cross.

These holy consorts, in ending their career[81] near the Holy Sepulchre, found there the memory of their grandmother, Melania the elder, with the always warlike zeal and exalted fame of St. Jerome. They could bask in the last rays of that great light. In the last epistle which he wrote and addressed to St. Augustine, Jerome speaks of them and calls them his children, his in common with the bishop of Hippo.[82]

It is thus that this choir of holy women, noble widows, and generous patrician ladies, of whom Marcella, Paula, and Melania are the leaders,[83] transmitted the line of monastic virtue and traditions from St. Athanasius to St. Augustine, through St. Jerome. The greatest names of the Church — of the East as well as of the West — have thus a part in the development of the cenobitical institution. We would fain linger over them, and enjoy their glory at length and in detail. But we must hasten our steps, and pass on to names more obscure and ages less known: we shall find there the grandeur which is inalienable from truth and virtue.

Opposition against the monastic life at Rome.

It would be a serious mistake to suppose that these heroic women, during their lifetime, encountered everywhere the admiration and sympathy which Christian posterity has given them; or that so much self-devotion, and so many generous sacrifices, could be accomplished without exciting a warm and powerful opposition from all the pagan elements, still so numerous and tenacious, which remained in Roman society. Among many Christians, the repugnances of our poor nature, always infirm and always jealous of every pure and superior force, were joined to the persevering animosity of pagan instincts. Our holy heroines had to be constantly in the breach, occupied in braving the entreaties, the importunities, and even

[81] They went to Jerusalem in 417. Albina died there in 433, Pinianus in 435, Melania the younger in 439 or 440. In the last years of her life she undertook a journey to Constantinople to convert her uncle Volusien. She struggled there against the Nestorians, and determined the Empress Eudoxia to come on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

[82] "Sancti filii communes . . . plurimum vos salutant." — S. Hieron., Epist. 79.

[83] Among them we must also point out that Demetrias, granddaughter of Petronius, of the family Anicia, of whom we have spoken above.

the injurious words of their relatives, and of all in the nobility who were averse to sacrifices so great. They were often reproached with robbing their children of their patrimony, or with abandoning them at an age when the maternal cares were a sacred duty. But the great examples of abnegation, poverty, and humility, which they offered to all classes of their fellow-citizens, excited special exasperation. It was not only, as a historian says, "the male and female animals of the senatorial order"[84] who were furious against these superhuman virtues; the popular masses also burst forth in opposition. This was clearly apparent at the funeral of Blesilla, the eldest daughter of Paula, in 384, when the Christian people of Rome collected in the streets, crying aloud, "This young woman has been killed by fasts. . . . When shall this detestable race of monks be expelled from the city? Why are they not stoned? Why not thrown into the Tiber?" Then, making maternal grief itself a weapon against all that the mother and daughter had most loved here below, the same accusers proceeded, showing Paula in tears, overwhelmed under the weight of her affliction: "Behold," said they, "how they have seduced this unhappy matron: for a sufficient proof how little she desired to be a *monkess*, never woman among the heathen has wept thus for her children."[85]

At Carthage.

The same sentiments as those of the plebeians at Rome were also found at Carthage, which had then become Roman and Christian, but was lost in all the excesses and refinements of corruption. Salvien informs us that when men in cloaks, pallid, and with shaven heads, were seen to appear in the cities of Africa, and especially in Carthage, coming from the monasteries of Egypt or the holy places of Jerusalem, the people scourged them with maledictions, hootings, and hisses,[86] and hunted them through the streets like pernicious beasts.

In the literary class.

And even when the popular masses had ended by yielding to the sway of these great examples, a large number of people still continued to entertain feelings of contempt and rage towards the monks, especially amongst

[84] "Spoliabat filios et inter objurgantes propinquos." — S. Hieron., *Vit. S. Paulæ*. "Sic depugnavit adversus bestias, nempe eos qui erant ordinis senatorii, et eorum uxores, prohibentes eam renuntiare reliquis suis ædibus." — *Vit. Melaniæ, in Hist. Lausiaca*, c. 118.

[85] S. Hieron., Epist. 22 (al. 25), *ad Paulam*.

[86] "Palliatum et pallidum et . . . usque ad cutem tonsum. . . . Improbissimis cachinnis et detestantibus videntium sibilis quasi taureis cædebatur." — *De Gubernat. Dei*, viii.

the literary class; and vigorous traces of this are to be found in the poems of Rutilius Numatianus. This Poitevin writer had long lived at Rome. He returned into his own country in 416, some years after the striking conversions which the Melanias, the Paulas, and the Marcellas had worked upon the Roman nobility; he has described the emotions of his voyage in a poem which is still in existence. Crossing the Mediterranean, he came in front of the isles and rock which were inhabited by patricians lately converted: "Behold," says he, "Capraja rises before us; that isle is full of wretches, enemies of light; they draw from the Greek their name of *monks*, because they would live without witnesses. Fear of the evils of fortune has made them dread its gifts. They make themselves poor in anticipation, lest one day they should become so; was there ever seen folly so perverse?" And further: "I see the Gorgon raise herself among the waves opposite the coast of Pisa; I detest these rocks, scene of a recent shipwreck. There one of my fellow-citizens has lost himself, descending alive into the tomb. He was recently one of us; he was young, of great birth, rich, well married. But, impelled by the furies, he has fled from men and gods, and now, credulous exile, lies decaying in a foul retreat. The unhappy one! he expects to feed upon celestial good in the midst of filth, more cruel to himself than the gods whom he offends should have been. Is not this sect more fatal than the poisons of Circe? Circe transformed only the bodies, but these transform the souls."[87]

The poet Rutilius.

This last adherent of paganism saw clearly: it was the

[87] "Processu pelagi jam se Capraria tollit.
Squalet lucifugis insula plena viris.
Ipsi se monachos Graio cognomine dicunt,
Quod soli nullo vivere teste volunt.
Munera fortunæ metuunt, dum damna verentur.
Quisquam sponte miser, ne miser esse queat?
Quænam perversi rabies tam stulta cerebri,
Dum mala formides, nec bona posse pati?
Sive suas repetunt ex fato ergastula pœnas;
Tristia seu nigro viscera felle tument . . .
Aversor scopulos, damni monumenta recentis:
Perditus hic vivo funere civis erat.
Noster enim nuper, juvenis majoribus amplis,
Nec censu inferior conjugiove minor.
Impulsus furiis homines divosque reliquit
Et turpem latebram credulus exsul agit . . .
Num rogo deterior Circæis secta venenis?
Tunc mutabantur corpora, nunc animi."
RUTILIUS NUMATIANUS, lib. i. v. 439-515.

souls which transformed themselves. From thence came the irremediable ruin of his gods, and the victory of the ideas and institutions which he pursued with his impotent malice.

The complaints and invectives of the pagan poets and rhetoricians came too late. The monks who had found apologists and models in the greatest doctors of the Eastern Church — Athanasius, Basil, and Chrysostom — were no less supported in the West, where they could invoke the example of Jerome, and where they had won to their cause the irresistible influence of Ambrose and of Augustine.

St. Ambrose defends the monks. 340-397.

Bishop Ambrose celebrated with love those very isles of the Mediterranean, peopled with monks, from the sight of which the poet Rutilius had turned with disgust. "It is there," said he, "in these isles thrown by God like a collar of pearls upon the sea, that those who would escape from the charms of dissipation find refuge: there they fly from the world, they live in austere moderation, they escape the ambushes of this life. The sea offers them as it were a veil, and a secret asylum to their mortifications. She helps them to win and defend perfect continence. There everything excites austere thoughts. Nothing there disturbs their peace: all access is closed to the wild passions of the world. The mysterious sound of the waves mingles with the chant of hymns; and while the waters break upon the shore of these happy islands with a gentle murmur, the peaceful accents of the choir of the elect ascend towards heaven from their bosom." [88]

Ambrose was that great man, eloquent and courageous, to whose cradle, as to Plato's, came a hive of bees, to leave upon the lips of the predestined infant the presage of a persuasive and irresistible eloquence. He had been the victorious advocate of Christianity against the plaintive pleading of Symmachus in favor of the altar of Victory, the last effort of official paganism. He had defended the rights of orthodoxy against the violence of Justina the Arian empress, and those of humanity and justice against the Emperor Theodosius, bathed in the blood of Thessalonica. Such a pontiff could not ignore the vital importance of the monastic institution, to the faith of which he was so intrepid and eloquent a champion. Accordingly we find he supported at the gates

[88] "Quid enumerem insulas, quas velut monilia plerumque prætexit, . . . ut cum undarum leniter alluentium sono certent cantus psallentium, plaudant insulæ tranquillo sanctorum choro, hymnis sanctorum personent?" — S. Ambros., *Hexameron*, iii. 5.

of his episcopal city a monastery full of excellent monks.[89] He was unwilling that converts should be frightened by requirements above their strength. "Let us," said he "leave those to flutter like sparrows who cannot soar like eagles."[90] But he seemed to be especially interested in the religious vocation of women. At the request of his sister Marcellina, who was a nun in Rome, he collected in three books, entitled *The Virgins*, the sermons which he had delivered in honor of monastic virginity. Nothing could be more eloquent than the opening of the third book, where Ambrose, carried back by memory to the day when this dear sister took the veil at Rome, in the church of the Apostles, at Christmas, hears and repeats the exhortation of the pope Liberius to the young novice. He did not fail to point out the dangers with which conventual life was surrounded in the splendor of Roman patrician society; and yet his words were so persuasive that the Milanese ladies shut up their daughters, lest, by hearing his sermons, they should be led too early into monastic life. He afterwards wrote a treatise *On Virginity*, which drew upon him the reproach of having denied the sanctity of marriage, and of preaching doctrines which, if put in practice, would condemn the human race to extinction. To these accusations, which have been renewed from age to age, the bishop of Milan answered, as the defenders of Christian sacrifice have always responded — "How!" said he, "these virgins shall be free to choose a husband, and they shall not have the liberty of fixing their choice upon a God! . . . It is complained that the human race will fail. I ask, who has ever sought a wife without finding one? The number of men is greater in those places where virginity is most esteemed. Inform yourselves how many virgins the Church of Alexandria and those of Africa and the East are accustomed to consecrate to God every year. There are more of them than there are men in Milan."[91]

His treatises upon monastic virginity.

Elsewhere, in that triumphant response to Symmachus, which breathes the ardor and force of a belief victorious by the energy of virtue alone, when he has struck dumb the pompous rhetoric of these sons of the persecutors, who demanded the re-establishment of the altar of Victory in the

[89] "Erat monasterium plenum bonis fratribus extra urbis mœnia, Ambrosio nutritore." — S. AUGUST., *Conf.*, viii. 6.

[90] "Qui non potest volitare ut aquila, volitet ut passer." — *De Fuga Seculi*, c. 5.

[91] *De Virginitate*, c. 5, 6, 7.

midst of the senate, and who claimed the right of making bequests in favor of the vestals, he contrasts the sight already presented by the Christian monasteries with that of these vestals, who, despite the honors still showered upon them, and the easy devotion of a temporary vow, were so few in number. "You can bring together only seven, and that with difficulty; yes, despite the bandbeaux, the diadems, and the purple with which you adorn them, notwithstanding the pompous litters, the numerous escort of servants, the privileges and immense profits which you offer them, these are all you can enroll in the service of chastity. But raise your eyes and your souls. See elsewhere this nation of innocents, this multitude of pure souls, this assembly of virgins; their heads are not ornamented by jewelled bands, they have but a coarse veil ennobled by its use. They do not seek, they cast aside everything which heightens beauty; they have neither purple nor luxury, no privileges, no profit, no delicacies, nothing, in short, but duties which reanimate their virtues." [92]

Ambrose, whose renown reached even the Barbarians, converting the queen of the Marcomans, and drawing from the depths of Mauritania virgins who came to Milan to receive the veil from his hands,[93] was considered the principal doctor of the Latin Church till Augustine appeared.

St. Augustine. 354-430.

It was at Milan, and in 385, the same year in which St. Jerome left Rome for the second and last time, to plunge again into the solitude of Bethlehem, that the inspired language of Ambrose, and the sight of this life entirely devoted to the service of God and our

[92] "Vix septem vestales capiuntur puellæ. Est totus numerus . . . videant plebem pudoris, populum integritatis, concilium virginitatis. Non vittæ capiti decus, sed ignobile velamen." — *Epist. Cl.* i. 18, t. ii. p. 836, ed. Bened. The translation is partly by M. Villemain.

[93] The veil was already the distinctive mark of virgins consecrated to God. St. Ambrose explains at length the meaning of that custom. — *De Virginit.*, lib. iii. c. 1. St. Jerome says expressly that, in the monasteries of Syria and Egypt, all who dedicated themselves to God had their hair cut by the mothers of the monasteries, and covered their heads with a black veil. — *Letters*, vol. v. pp. 169, 385, ed. Collombet. St. Augustine, in his rule for nuns, forbids them to wear veils so flowing that their hair or head-dress might be seen. However, the veil was regarded by many of the Fathers as obligatory for all maidens, and even for wives who respected themselves. Tertullian, addressing the Christian women of his time on this subject, quotes the example of the pagan women of Arabia, who, like the Orientals of our days, concealed their faces, with the exception of one eye. "Indicabunt vos Arabiæ feminæ ethnicæ, quæ non caput sed faciem quoque ita totam tegunt, ut *uno oculo liberato*, contentæ sint dimidiam frui lucem, quam totam faciem prostituere." — *De Virgin. Veland.*, c. 16.

neighbor, began to open the eyes of the young Augustine. It was there, a year later, that a revelation of what was passing in souls drawn by the spirit of God towards monastic life, burst upon him with a light which he no longer desired to resist. At nineteen he had been filled with contempt for the baseness of the contemporary world, and inspired by a noble enthusiasm for the good and the beautiful, for intellectual struggles, and the attainment of wisdom, by reading the *Hortensius* of Cicero. But a day came in which he learned that there is something greater than knowledge, and a purer enthusiasm than that of eloquence or philosophy. What the genius of Cicero had done for his mind, the life of Anthony, related by Athanasius, did for his soul. We have already mentioned that Athanasius had written a Life of St. Anthony, in which he summed up the marvels of the Thebaid, and which spread through all the West, like the glory of the illustrious fugitive who was its author. Let us leave Augustine himself to relate how it reached as far as Trèves, originating in the very heart of the imperial court monastic vocations, the narratives of which were destined to produce other conquests of grace. This immortal page of the *Confessions* belongs essentially to monastic history: it shows, by the testimony of the greatest man of the time, that action of the Thebaid upon the West, of which the holy patriarch of Alexandria, exiled in Gaul and Italy, had been the providential instrument. It offers, besides, the most eloquent and exact picture ever traced of those struggles of the soul, from which have proceeded, both before and after Augustine, all those conversions which have filled monasteries and heaven.

Augustine was at Milan, where he lectured on eloquence with his friend Alypius, when he received a visit from one of his African countrymen, Potitianus, one of the first military officers of the palace, and already a Christian. "We seated ourselves," says Augustine, "to talk, when he happened to notice a book which lay upon a card-table before us. He opened it; it was the Apostle Paul. . . . I confessed to him that reading this was my principal study. He was then led by the conversation to speak to us of Anthony, the monk of Egypt, whose name, so glorious among Thy servants, was unknown to us. He perceived this, and confined himself to that subject; he revealed this great man to our ignorance, which astonished him exceedingly. We were in a stupor of admiration to hear of these unquestionable marvels, which were

Narrative of St. Augustine on the origin of his conversion.

so recent, almost contemporary, worked in the true faith, in the Catholic Church. And we were mutually surprised, we to learn, and he to teach us, these extraordinary facts. And from thence his discourse flowed upon the holy flocks of the monasteries, and the perfumes of virtue which exhaled from them towards their Lord, over those fertile wastes of the desert, of which we knew nothing. And even at Milan, outside the walls, was a cloister full of good brothers, trained under the wing of Ambrose, and we were ignorant of it.

"He continued to speak, and we listened in silence; and he told us how one day, at Trèves, when the emperor was spending the afternoon at the spectacles of the circus, he and three of his companions went to walk in the gardens close by the walls of the town; and as they walked two-and-two, one with him, and the two others together, they separated. The two latter entered a cabin on their way, where lived some of these voluntary poor who are Thy servants — these poor in spirit who shall inherit the kingdom of heaven — and there they found a manuscript of the life of Anthony. One of them began to read it; he admired it, his heart burned, and as he read the thought rose of embracing such a life, and leaving the warfare of the age to serve Thee: they were both in the service of the emperor. Suddenly filled with a divine love and a holy shame, he grew angry against himself, and casting his eyes on his friend, 'Tell me, I pray thee, whither all our labors tend? What do we seek? For whom do we carry arms? What can be our greatest hope in the palace but to be friends of the emperor? And how frail is that fortune! what perils! and how many perils before reaching the greatest peril! Besides, when shall that be attained? But if I desire to be a friend of God, I am so, and instantly.'

"He spoke thus, all shaken by the birth of his new life, and then, his eyes returning to the holy pages, he read: his heart changed to thy sight, and his mind freed itself from the world, as was soon after apparent. He read, and the waves of his soul flowed trembling; he saw and overcame, and he was already Thine, when he said from his soul, 'It is done, I break with all our hope; I will serve God, and now, in this place, I begin the work. If thou wilt not follow me, deter me not.' The other answered that he also would win his share of the glory and spoil. And both, already Thy servants, built the tower which is raised with that which is lost by following Thee.

"Potitianus and his companion, after having walked in an-

other part of the garden, reached this retreat, seeking them, and warned them that it was time to return, because the day fell. But they, declaring their design, how this resolution had come to them and established itself in their minds, entreated their friends not to oppose their determination, if they refused to share it. The latter, not feeling any change of heart, nevertheless wept over themselves, said Potitianus. They piously congratulated their comrades, recommending themselves to their prayers. Then they returned to the palace, their hearts still drawn towards the earth; and the others, their hearts still aspiring towards heaven, remained in the cabin. Both had betrothed brides, who, on hearing this, consecrated to Thee their virginity."

Augustine continues: one never wearies of quoting him. "I devoured myself inwardly: I was penetrated with confusion and shame while Potitianus spoke. He went away. And then what did I not say to myself? In that violent disturbance of the inner world, where I pursued my soul to the most secret stronghold of my heart, with a face troubled like my spirit, I seized Alypius, and cried out, 'What then are we doing? how is this? what hast thou been hearing? These ignorant men rise; they take heaven by force; and we, with our heartless sciences, behold us wallowing in the flesh and in our blood! Is it shameful to follow them, and are we not rather disgraced by not following them?' He was silent in surprise, and looked at me, for my accent was changed; and my forehead, my cheeks, my eyes, the color of my face, disclosed my mind much more than the words that escaped me. Our house had a little garden. . . . The tempest of my heart led me there. . . . Alypius followed me step by step; for I was alone even in his presence. We seated ourselves as far off as possible from the house. I trembled in my soul, and excited myself into the most violent indignation that I still could not yield myself to Thy will, to Thy alliance, O my God, to which all the powers of my soul urged me, crying: Courage! . . . But these vanities of vanities, my ancient mistresses, shook me by my robe of flesh, and whispered to me, 'Dost thou send us away? What! from this moment shall we be no more with thee forever? And from this moment, this very moment, shall this be no longer permitted to thee, and forever?' . . . They attacked me no more in front, quarrelsome and bold, but by timid whisperings murmured over my shoulder, by furtive attacks, they solicited a glance. . . . The violence of habit said to me, Canst thou live without them? But already even this spoke with a languishing

voice. For on the side to which I turned my face, and which I feared to pass, the chaste majesty of continence disclosed herself. . . . She stretched out to receive and embrace me, her hands full of good examples; children, young girls, youth in abundance, all ages, venerable widows, women grown old in virginity, and continence was not barren in these holy souls: she produced generations of celestial joys, which she owed, O Lord! to Thy conjugal love. And she seemed to say to me, with a sweet and encouraging irony: What! canst not thou do a thing which is possible to these children, to these women?

"Then a frightful storm arose in my heart, charged with a rain of tears. To give them entire vent, I rose and withdrew from Alypius. I threw myself on the ground under a fig-tree, and gave full course to my tears, . . . and I addressed Thee, not in these terms, but with this meaning: 'O Lord, how long wilt Thou be angry against me? Remember not my past iniquities.' For I felt that they held me still. And I allowed these pitiful words to escape me, 'When? what day? to-morrow? after to-morrow? wherefore not at this instant? why should I not make an end at once with my shame?' And all at once I heard proceeding from a neighboring house like the voice of a child or of a young girl, which sang and repeated these words: 'Take, read! take, read!' I stayed my tears, and saw in that a divine command to open the book of the Apostle, and to read the first chapter that came. I knew that Anthony, coming in one day while the Gospel was being read, had taken as addressed to himself, these words: 'Go, sell that which thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me;' and that such an oracle had immediately converted him to Thee. I returned quickly to the place where Alypius was seated; for on rising I had left the book of the Apostle. I took it, opened it, and read in silence the first chapter on which I cast my eyes. 'Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' I would not, I had no occasion to read further. Scarcely had I completed these lines, when, as if a light of assurance had spread over my soul, the darkness of doubt disappeared." [94]

[94] S. Augustin, *Confessions*, liv. viii. c. 6. to 12, from the translation of M. Louis Moreau, with some improvements borrowed from M. Villemain.

The remainder of the tale, and how the immortal son of Monica became a Christian, then a priest, then a bishop, and in short the greatest doctor of his times, and, perhaps, of all ages, is well known.

Monastic life of St. Augustine.

But it is not sufficiently known, that from his return to Africa, if he was not, properly speaking, a monk,[95] he lived according to the rules of monastic life.

When only a priest, he formed at Hippo a monastery, where he lived in evangelical poverty.[96] On his promotion to the episcopate, being no less desirous to continue the life in common with the servants of God which he had led since his conversion, he founded a second community composed of the clergy of his episcopal see,[97] in the midst of which he ended his career, and which became a nursery of bishops. When accused by the Donatist Petilian of having introduced a novelty into the Church by inventing monastic life, he answered that if the name of monastery is new, the manner of life followed by the monks, founded upon the example of the apostles and first Christians, is as ancient as the Church.[98]

The monastic institution, then, can claim the glory of him who has been declared the greatest and most celebrated of theologians,[99] the father and master of all preachers of the Holy Gospel,[100] and who takes his place between Plato and Bossuet, between Cicero and St. Thomas d'Aquinas, in the first rank of those rare minds who soar over time. This man, great in thought as in faith, in genius as in virtue, and born to exercise over his own time and all times the most legitimate sway, received his final training from the exercises and

[95] The question whether Augustine was or was not a monk, has been long and very unprofitably debated. He had evidently the same right to the name as St. Basil, St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostom, and all the other Fathers whose condition is not disputed. Thomassin (part I., lib. iii. c. iii. 9) maintains that Augustine was never a monk, but only the founder of a congregation of clerks, bound by a vow of continence and charity. It is not easy to perceive the difference, looking at the period in which the saint lived, prior to much of the more recent and precise regulation of monastic character. On the other side, M. Collombet points out a tract of Ferrand, parliamentary advocate, entitled *Discours où l'on fait voir que St. Augustin a été Moine.* Paris, 1689.

[96] "Quia hoc disponebam in monasterio esse cum fratribus, . . . cœpi boni propositi fratres colligere, compares meos, nihil habentes, sicut nihil habebam, et imitantes me." — *Sermo* 355, ed. Gaume, vol. ii.

[97] "Et ideo volui habere in ista domo episcopii mecum monasterium clericorum." — *Ibid.*

[98] *Contra Litt. Pet.*, lib. iii. c. 40.

[99] Bossuet, Letter of October 1693.

[100] The same, Sermon for the Ceremony of Taking the Vows.

austerities of cloistral life. Doubtless all is not perfect in the remains he has left to us: the subtility, obscurity, and bad taste of an age of literary decay, are to be found there. But who has ever excelled him in the extent, the variety, and inexhaustible fertility of his labors, the profound sensibility and charming candor of his soul, the ardent curiosity, the elevation and expansion of his mind? Two great productions stand forth from the mass of his innumerable works, and will last as long as Catholic truth: the *Confessions*, in which repentance and humility have involuntarily clothed themselves in the sublime robes of genius, and which have made the inner life of Augustine the patrimony of all Christians; and the *City of God*, which is at once a triumphant defence of Christianity, and the first essay at the true philosophy of history, which Bossuet alone was destined to surpass. His life, consumed and devoured by an inextinguishable thirst for goodness, is but a long combat, first against the learned follies and shameful vices of the Manicheans; then against the culpable exaggerations of the Donatists, who pushed their sanguinary rigorism the length of schism rather than submit to the wise indulgence of Rome; again in opposition to the Pelagians, who claimed for human liberty the right of doing without God; finally and always, against the remnants of paganism, which struggled in Africa with all the old obstinacy of Carthage against the new and victorious religion of Rome. He died at seventy-six, upon the walls of his episcopal city, besieged by the Vandals, a living image of that Church which rose between the Roman empire and the barbarian world to protect the ruin and purify the conquest. 430.

The ardor of controversy was always tempered in this holy soul by tender charity. "Slay error," he said, "but always love the man who errs." [101] His generous toleration.

Let us also quote this passage against the Manicheans, which is worthy of being reckoned among the noblest effusions of Catholic faith, and of which those forgetful neophytes who constitute themselves the avengers of truth should be perpetually reminded: —

"Let those persecute you, who know not with what labor the truth is found, nor how difficult it is to avoid error. Let those persecute who do not know how rare and hard it is to vanquish, even with all the serenity of a pious soul, the

[101] "Interficite errores, diligite homines."

attractions of the flesh; who do not know what efforts are necessary to heal the eye of the inner man, that he may look at his sun. . . . Let those persecute you who are ignorant by what sighs and groans a knowledge of God is attained, and how imperfect it is even then. In fine, let those persecute who have never yielded to the error in which they see you involved. As for me who, long and cruelly tossed to and fro, have at last seen the pure truth, . . . me who, to dissipate the darkness of my mind, have been so slow to submit to the merciful physician who called and caressed me; me who have wept so long that God might deign to reveal himself to my soul; me who of old sought with eagerness, listened with attention, believed with rashness, who have endeavored to persuade others, and to defend with obstinacy those dreams in which you are held enchained by habit; as for me, I can be severe upon you in nothing, but ought to bear with you now as I bore with myself at a former time,[102] and treat you with the same patience which my neighbor showed towards me, when, furious and blind, I struggled in your error."

At a later period, it is true, he supposed he had been mistaken in refusing to employ any other means than those of persuasion against the heretics.[103] He asked or accepted the aid of the sword of the Cæsars, still red with the blood of Christians sacrificed to false gods, and of orthodox believers immolated to Arianism. But this was always accompanied by a protest against the infliction of capital punishment, or any other cruel penalty, upon the votaries of error. He found these incompatible with Catholic gentleness; and entreated the imperial clemency not to stain the memorial of the agonies of the servants of God, ever glorified in the Church, with the blood of an enemy.[104] Moreover, between

[102] "Illi in vos sæviant qui nesciunt cum quo labore verum inveniatur. . . . Ego autem, qui diu multumque jactatus tandem respicere potui . . . sævire in vos omnino non possum," &c. — *Contra Epistolam Manichæi*, c. 2 and 3, vol. viii. p. 267, ed. Gaume. Let us add to this admirable passage a word from the most eloquent monk of our own days: — "The converted man who has no pity, is, in my eyes, a vile creature. He is the centurion who, instead of beating his breast on recognizing the Christ, becomes executioner." — Father Lacordaire, *Lettre du 14 Septembre* 1853.

[103] *Epist.* 93 and 185, vol. ii. pp. 343 and 965.

[104] "Pœna sane illorum, quamvis de tantis sceleribus confessorum, rogo te ut præter supplicium mortis sit, et propter conscientiam nostram et propter catholicam mansuetudinem commendandam . . . ne passiones servorum Dei, quæ debent esse in Ecclesiæ gloriosæ, inimicorum sanguine dehonestentur." — *Epist.* 139, vol. ii. p. 625.

these two opinions we are free to choose, for imitation and admiration, that which is most completely in accordance with his genius and his heart, as with the true glory and strength of the Church.

But we cannot here expatiate upon St. Augustine. We must return to that which concerns exclusively his connection with the monastic order. He gave it first of all his example, by living, as has been seen, from the time of his conversion, as a cenobite with other cenobites, and in imitation of the monks whose customs he had studied at Rome.[105] He was especially careful to secure the strict observance of monastic poverty by himself and the brethren of his episcopal monastery. This law of personal disinterestedness based upon a community of goods, was an urgent necessity in such a country as Africa, where the thirst for gold and luxury was universal, and where friends and enemies watched with a jealous eye the progress of clerical wealth. Augustine took, therefore, great pains in rendering account to his people of the employment of the modest patrimony on which his community was supported, and of his unceasing refusal of donations and legacies to augment it, when their source did not appear to him completely pure. "Let him," said he, "who would disinherit his son to endow the Church, seek whom he will to accept his bequest; it shall not be Augustine. Still more, if God pleases, no man shall accept it."

Rule of St. Augustine.

Such an example, seconded by such a genius, could not remain barren: and Augustine is justly regarded as having introduced the monastic order for both sexes into the Church of Africa, in the midst of that incredible corruption which surpassed that of all the rest of the world, and of which Salvian has left us too faithful a picture.[106] Not only did numerous monasteries multiply upon African soil, according to the wish manifested by Augustine,[107] on lands and gardens given up for that purpose by the great proprietors of the country; but the secular clergy themselves seem to have imitated, in many quarters, the model offered to them by the bishop of Hippo and the brethren who lived under his roof, and also by that of his friend Alypius, now become bishop of Tagaste.[108] He had besides

[105] *De Moribus Eccl. Cathol.*, c. 33.

[106] *De Gubernat. Dei*, lib. vii. and viii.

[107] "Propositum tam bonum, tam sanctum, quod in Christi nomine cupimus, sicut per alias terras, sic per totam Africam pullulare." — *De Opere Monachorum*, c. 28.

[108] *Epist. Paulin. ad Alyp.*, in *Op. Aug.*, t. ii. p. 51.

founded in Hippo a monastery of women, of which he made his own sister superior. It was to calm the dissensions which had arisen there, and to prevent all disorder in future, that Augustine drew out the famous *Rule* which bears his name. Written in 423, divided into twenty-four articles, and originally destined for these simple African nuns, it was resuscitated under Charlemagne, as we shall see further on, and became then the fundamental code of an immense branch of the monastic order. It has served as the basis of a multitude of congregations, and principally of the canons-regular who have borne up to our days the name of St. Augustine. Eight centuries after the ruin of ancient Rome and the invasion of the Barbarians, when St. Dominic desired to create in the midst of the triumphant Church a new army to ward off new dangers, he did not hesitate to adopt for its rule the constitution which the greatest of the Fathers of the Church had given to the modest convent of his sister.[109]

Thus, without suspecting it, not content with reigning over his contemporaries and posterity by his genius and doctrine, Augustine enriched the domains of the Church with an institution which, after fourteen centuries, still remains fruitful and glorious in many of its branches.

His treatise *De Opere Monachorum.*

But even in his lifetime he rendered to the Church and the monastic order a more direct and not less remarkable service. Such is the lamentable infirmity of human things, that progress in goodness is always accompanied by a corresponding recrudescence of original corruption. It disguises itself under a thousand devices and novel forms, but it always reappears in order the better to establish the merit and freedom of Christian devotedness. The abuses of the monastic order had risen amidst the primitive fervor of the institution. They displayed themselves forcibly in the general depravity of Africa, at the very period when Augustine carried there the first fruits of his zeal and austerity. The monasteries were filled with a certain number of men escaped from the hard obligations of rural or municipal life, such as were endured under the last emperors of the West, who came there to seek and practise indolence. Still more, a sect of hypocritical and sluggish monks was formed, called the *Messalians*, who wandered through the

[109] A list of the numerous congregations and military orders which followed the rule of St. Augustine, may be seen in the *Histoire des Ordres Religieux*, by P. Helyot. It fills the second and third volumes of that great work, edition of 1714–15.

country and the towns begging, selling or displaying relics and amulets.[110] They preached against labor, appealing to that text, "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" And in order to be more like the birds, who do not divest themselves of their plumage, they allowed their hair to grow — the reverse of the regular monks, for the complete tonsure was already a kind of consecrated custom. From thence arose scandals and disorders. The Bishop of Carthage, whose diocese was especially troubled with them, entreated his colleague of Hippo to put down these impostors. Augustine did it in a celebrated essay, entitled *De Opere Monachorum*, which remains to us as an exposition of the motives of that law of labor which has been the glory and strength of the monks, and also as an unchangeable sentence pronounced beforehand against the laxness of after ages.

Some curious details as to the manner by which monasteries at that period recruited their ranks are to be found here. "Sometimes slaves," says he, "sometimes freedmen of old standing, or men enfranchised by their masters on purpose that they may become monks, are seen arriving to embrace the religious profession; these peasants, laborers, and plebeians, have passed an apprenticeship rude enough to render them apt in their new condition. To refuse them would be a crime, for many of them have already given great examples of virtue." [111] He would then have these applicants admitted even although the motive which led them was doubtful, whether it was to serve God, or only to flee from a hard and indigent life, to be fed, clothed, and even honored by those who had been accustomed to disdain and oppress them.[112] But he would have them, above all, rigorously constrained to labor. Contrasted with these plebeians, he quotes the example of patricians, whose conversion at the same time edified all the Church, and who watered with their sweat the monastic gardens. "It is not right," says he, "that mere workmen should be idle where senators are seen to labor; nor that

[110] "Alii membra martyrum, si tamen martyrum, venditant; alii fimbrias et phylacteria sua magnificant." — *De Opere Monachorum*, c. 28.

[111] "Nunc veniunt plerique . . . ex professione servili, vel etiam liberti, vel propter hoc a dominis liberati seu liberandi, et a vita rusticana et ab opificum exercitatione et plebeio labore, . . . qui si non admittantur, grave delictum est." — *De Opere Monachorum*, c. 22.

[112] "Neque apparet utrum . . . an pasci atque vestiri voluerint, et insuper honorari ab eis a quibus contemni conterique consueverant." — *Ibid.*

peasants should be fastidious, where the lords of vast patrimonies come to sacrifice their wealth."[113] He also combats the apologists of religious idleness by the example and words of St. Paul, who passed his life making tents by the labor of his hands. To those who pretended to do away with labor in order to sing the praises of God, he answered that they could very well sing and work, as the boatmen and laborers often did.[114] He ended by sighing for the regulated and moderate work of the monks who divided their day between manual labor, reading, and prayer, whilst it fell to his lot to consume his life in the painful and tumultuous perplexities of the episcopate, then complicated by the settlement and arbitration of a multitude of temporal affairs.

Thus, after having had for their defender the greatest of the Fathers of the East, St. John Chrysostom, the monks had the honor of finding a legislator and reformer in the most illustrious and eloquent of the Fathers of the West. Both consecrated their genius to defend and regulate an institution which appeared more and more necessary to the Church and Christendom.

St. Fulgentius. 456-533.

Before leaving Africa let us refer to another holy monk, illustrious by his eloquence and writings, a bishop like Augustine, and like Athanasius exiled for the faith. St. Fulgentius, the abbot of an African monastery, inspired by reading the life of the Fathers of the desert, went to the Thebaid to live as a solitary. But Egypt, torn by schisms and heresies, and already given up to the spirit of death, had, at the end of the fifth century, only rare intervals of light and fervor. Fulgentius had to content himself with extending the monastic institution in Sardinia, whither he was exiled by a Vandal and Arian king, and of consolidating it by his best efforts in Africa, where the Church, at one time so flourishing with its seven hundred bishoprics, was soon to sink during the struggle waged against a decrepid and corrupt civilization by the fury of the Vandals, that ferocious nation which was the terrible precursor of the terrible Islam.

The persecution of the Vandals drove back the cenobitical institution from Africa to Spain: we shall speak hereafter of its obscure and uncertain beginnings in the Iberian Peninsula.

[113] "Nullo modo decet in hac vita ubi sunt senatores laboriosi, sint artifices otiosi, et quo veniunt relictis divitiis qui fuerunt prædiorum domini, ibi sint rustici delicati." — *Ibid.*, c. 25.

[114] *De Opere Monachorum*, c. 17.

But in the first place let us return to Gaul, which has been too long passed over in this rapid review of the origin of the monastic institution in the West, and which was about to become the promised land of monastic life. Here again we find Athanasius, and the fertile seed which that glorious exile had spread through the world. Exiled to Trèves by Constantine in 336, he inspired all the clergy of the Gauls [115] with his ardor for the Nicene faith, and for the noble life of the solitaries of the Thebaid. The narrative of St. Augustine has showed what effect the history of St. Anthony, written by St. Athanasius and found by them at Trèves, produced upon some officers of the imperial court. This event demonstrates the sudden power with which that enthusiasm for monastic life extended itself in the midst of the dissolute, impoverished, and saddened existence of the Roman empire, at the gates of which the Barbarians already struck redoubted blows.[116] From Trèves, which was its cradle in the West, the new institution, aided by the influence of the writings of Athanasius, spread rapidly through Gaul, where it had the singular fortune of being first established by the greatest and most lastingly popular man of the Gallican Church. That man was St. Martin, bishop of Tours.

Origin of monastic institutions in Gaul.

Influence of Athanasius.

Born in Pannonia of a pagan father, a tribune of the imperial army, the young Martin, at the age of ten, made his escape from his father's house to give himself to Christ, and to be educated by the priests, with the intention of becoming a monk like the hermits of Egypt and the East, whose fame had already travelled to the banks of the Danube. But it was in vain: in his capacity as son of a veteran, the laws of the empire obliged him to serve in the army. Servitude existed everywhere in this imperial world. His own father betrayed him. At fifteen Martin was seized, bound, and enrolled by force in the cavalry, which he could not leave till he had made twenty campaigns! He lived with the frugality and austerity of a monk, although he was still only a catechumen,[117] and it was during this long and cruel novitiate that his miraculous meeting occurred at Amiens with that poor man to whom he gave the half of his

St. Martin of Tours.

316-397.

[115] Athanasius was three times in Gaul, in 336, 346, and 349.

[116] Ozanam, *De la Civilisation Chrétienne au v^e Siècle.*

[117] "Animus tamen aut circa monasteria aut circa Ecclesiam semper intentus. . . . Raptus et catenatus . . . ita ut non miles, sed monachus putaretur." — Sulp. Sever., *Hist. d. Mart.*, c. 1.

cloak, and who has made his fame so popular. Delivered at last, "this veteran of the Roman army, educated in camps for the Church," [118] sought in Christendom for a bishop under whose wing he could find shelter for the rest of his days.

Pupil of St. Hilary of Poitiers.

His choice was fixed upon St. Hilary, bishop of Poitiers.[119] There was none more illustrious in the Church. He vied with Athanasius in defending the divinity of Jesus, and, inaccessible like him to seductions and violence, resisted victoriously, as he did, every effort of the imperial power in favor of heresy. Both had the same fate. The Patriarch of Alexandria had scarcely returned from the exile which had sent him from the Nile to the Rhine, when the illustrious doctor of Poitiers was banished for the same cause into the depths of Asia Minor. Aided by the immense extent of the empire, despotism did not hesitate to cast a confessor of the faith from one extremity of the world to the other; but these caprices of blind force remained powerless, and the arm of the persecutor only served to throw afar the seed of truth and the example of courage.

Hilary received the old soldier with joy, conferred minor orders upon him against his will, and then sent him to Pannonia to convert his mother. The Arians, everywhere implacable and all-powerful, soon expelled him from his own country, at the same time as the holy bishop of Poitiers was on his way to exile. Martin would not return to Gaul without his friend; he stopped at Milan in a monastery,[120] and then went on to the almost desert isle of Gallinara, in sight of the coast of Genoa, where he lived on roots to prepare himself the better for monastic life.

He founds, at Ligugé, the first monastery of the Gauls.

The triumphant return of Hilary in 360 led him back to Poitiers, and it was at the gates of this town that Martin then founded, with the concurrence of the bishop, that monastery of Ligugé which history designates as the most ancient in Gaul.[121] His youthful ambition was satisfied; all his trials, all his crosses were surmounted: behold him a monk! But soon a pious fraud drew

[118] Villemain.

[119] Born in 300, died in 367 or 368.

[120] "Mediolani sibi monasterium constituit." — Sulp. Sever., *Vit. S. Martini*, c. 4.

[121] Many previous examples are, however, quoted, such as that monastery of the Isle Barbe, which offered an asylum to the Christians of Lyon during the persecution of Severus; but this priority is not certainly established. — Compare Mabillon, *Præfat. in sæc.* iii. *Benedict.*, and the learned Notice of M. Cousseau, bishop of Angoulême, inserted in the Memoirs of the Society of Antiquaries of the West.

him from his cloister to raise him to the metropolitan see of Tours. In vain he struggled against the hand of God which refused repose and obscurity to him. From that moment, during his whole life, as after his death, the Christian universe was filled with the fame of his sanctity and miracles.[122]

Martin's life as bishop.

He was, in the first place, the most dreaded enemy of all the remnants of paganism which existed among the Gauls. We see him, accompanied by his monks, going over the country, casting down the Druidical monuments and oaks consecrated by the ancient national worship of the Gauls, and, at the same time, the temples and statues of the Roman gods; victors and vanquished together yielded to the new conqueror. However, the rural population defended their altars and venerable trees with a desperation which went so far as to threaten the life of Martin. But he braved their rage with as much resolution as he put forth in contending with demons; for in the midst of his apostolic journeys, like Anthony in the depths of the Thebaid, the great bishop was assailed by frightful phantoms, which took the form of the gods whose altars he had broken, appearing to him in the shape of Jupiter or Mercury, oftener still of Venus or Minerva, and making the air resound with their clamors and reproaches.[123]

But God had specially chosen him, as well as St. Hilary, to save Gaul from that contagion of Arianism which infected at once Romans and Barbarians. The two bishops opened the glorious annals of the Gallican Church by the noblest personification of dignity and charity. Martin was called to Trèves, where he retraced the steps of St. Athanasius, and was destined to meet with St. Ambrose. The Emperor Maximus held his court there, amid the abject adulation of a crowd of bishops, who inthralled the dignity of the priesthood to imperial favoritism. "Alone among them all," says his biographer, "Martin preserved the dignity of an apostle."[123a] He did still more for the honor of his name and his faith by protesting against the intervention of secular power

His noble attitude at the court of the Emperor.

His zeal against the persecuting bishops.

[122] Bossuet, *Hist. Universelle.*

[123] "Diabolus. . . . Interdum in Jovis personam, plerumque Mercurii, persæpe etiam se Veneris ac Minervæ transfiguratum vultibus offerebat. . . . Audiebantur etiam plerumque convicia, quibus illum turba dæmonum protervis vocibus increpabat." — Sulp. Sever., c. 24.

[123a] "Cum ad imperatorem . . . plures . . . episcopi convenissent, et fœda circa principem omnium adulatio notaretur, seque degeneri inconstantia regiæ clientelæ sacerdotalis dignitas subdidisset, in solo Martino apostolica auctoritas permanebat." — Sulp. Sever., c. 23.

in ecclesiastical causes, and against the punishment of the heretic Priscillian and his associates. The Emperor Maximus had yielded to the importunities of the Spanish bishops, who, themselves scarcely escaped from the sword of pagan executioners, already demanded the blood of heretics. Martin pursued the accusers with his reproaches, and the emperor with his supplications. He insisted that excommunication, pronounced against the heretics by episcopal sentence, was sufficient, and more than sufficient, to punish them.[124] He believed that he had succeeded, and left Trèves only on receiving the imperial promise that mercy should be extended to the culprits.

But, after his departure, the unworthy bishops returned to the charge, and wrested from Maximus the order to execute Priscillian and his principal disciples.[125] Informed of this detestable judgment, Martin returned from Tours to Trèves, to procure the safety, at least, of the rest of the sect. But he had solemnly rejected the communion of persecuting bishops;[126] and he only consented to remove the brand with which the public reprobation of so holy a bishop marked his colleagues, on perceiving that this was the sole means of saving the lives of the Priscillianists who remained to be murdered in Spain,[127] where, however, the death of their chief, who was henceforward regarded as a martyr, far from extinguishing his heresy, served only to strengthen and extend it.[128] Still he reproached himself greatly with his concession; he declared with tears that he felt his virtue lessened by it. During the sixteen remaining years of his life he kept back from all the assemblies of bishops, fearful of meeting those whom he regarded as guilty of a crime and unheard-of novelty in the annals of the Church.[129] He thus

[124] "Satis superque sufficere, ut episcopali sententia hæretici judicati ecclesiis pellerentur." — Sulp. Sever., *Hist. Sacr.*, lib. ii. *in fin.*

[125] "Imperator per Magnum et Rufum episcopos depravatus. . . . Hoc modo homines luce indignissimi, pessimo exemplo necati." — *Ibid.* "Depravatus consiliis sacerdotum." — *Dial.* 4, *De Vit. S. Martini.*

[126] St. Ambrose, who was also at Trèves at this period, withdrew equally from the communion of the bishops who pursued the Priscillianists to death.

[127] "Illa præcipua cura, ne tribuni cum jure gladiorum ad Hispanias mitterentur: pia enim erat sollicitudo Martino, ut non solum Christianos qui sub illa erant occasione vexandi, sed ipsos etiam hæreticos liberaret." — Sulp., *Dialog.*, *loc. cit.*

[128] "Priscilliano occiso, non solum non repressa est hæresis, . . . sed confirmata latus propagata est." — Sulp. Sever., *loc. cit.*

[129] "Novum et inauditum facinus." — Sulp., *Hist. Sacr.*, *loc. cit.* "Subinde nobiscum lacrymis fatebatur, et propter communionis illius malum . . . detrimentum sentire virtutis." — *Dial.*

kept the noble promise which his master, St. Hilary, had made when, denouncing to the Emperor Constantius the atrocious cruelties of the Arians against the Catholics, he added, "If such violence was employed to sustain the true faith, the wisdom of the bishops should oppose it; they should say, God will not have a forced homage. What need has He of a profession of faith produced by violence? We must not attempt to deceive Him; He must be sought with simplicity, served by charity, honored and gained by the honest exercise of our free will." [130] And the glorious confessor added: "Woe to the times when the divine faith stands in need of earthly power; when the name of Christ, despoiled of its virtue, is reduced to serve as a pretext and reproach to ambition; when the Church threatens her adversaries with exile and prison, by means of which she would force them to believe, she who has been upheld by exiles and prisoners; when she leans upon the greatness of her protectors, she who has been consecrated by the cruelty of her persecutors!" [131]

Martin, on returning to his diocese, had also to undergo the scandalous envy and enmity of many bishops, and of those priests of Gaul who had been so soon tainted by Roman luxury, and who already made themselves remarked by the pomp of their equipages, their costumes, and their dwellings.[132] But amid the cares of his episcopate, he sighed more than ever after the sweetness of monastic life. To enjoy this he founded, half a league from Tours, the celebrated monastery which has honored his name for more than fourteen centuries. Marmoutier [133] was then a kind of desert enclosed between the right bank of the

Foundation of Marmoutier.

[130] "Si ad fidem veram istius modi vis adhiberetur, episcopalis doctrina obviam pergeret, diceretque: Deus . . . non requirit coactam confessionem. Simplicitate quærendus est . . . voluntatis probitate retinendus." — S. Hilarii. *Ad Constant.*, lib. i. c. 6.

[131] "At nunc, proh dolor! divinam fidem suffragia terrena commendant, inopsque virtutis suæ Christus, dum ambitio nomini suo conciliatur, arguitur. Terret exsiliis et carceribus Ecclesia: credique sibi cogit, quæ exsiliis et carceribus est credita. Pendet ad dignationem communicantium, quæ persequentium est consecrata terrore." — S. Hilar., *Cont. Auxent.*, ii. 4.

[132] "Qui ante pedibus aut asello ire consueverat, spumante equo superbus invehitur. . . . Inter episcopos sævientes cum fere quotidianis scandalis hinc atque inde premeretur, . . . non illi ego quemquam audebo monachorum, certe nec episcoporum quempiam comparare. . . . Nec tamen huic crimini miscebo populares; soli illum clerici, soli nesciunt sacerdotes." — Sulp. Sever., *Dial.*, c. 14, 17, 18.

[133] *Martini monasterium*, or *Majus monasterium*. Of this magnificent monastery, one of the greatest and richest in France, the archway of an outhouse in the external enclosure is all that remains. The rest of the building has been thrown down and demolished.

Loire and the scarped rocks which overlook the course of the stream; it could be entered only by a very narrow path. The holy bishop inhabited there a cell made of interlaced branches, like that which he had for only too short a time occupied at Ligugé. The eighty monks whom he had collected there dwelt for the most part in pigeon-holes hollowed in the rock, and were attired only in camel skins. Among them were many noble Gauls, who were afterwards drawn from their retreat to be made bishops, like Martin, in spite of themselves.

Arrived at the end of his career, eighty years old, and eager to receive his celestial reward, he yielded to the tears of his disciples, and consented to ask from God the prolongation of his days. "Lord," said he, "if I am still necessary to Thy people, I would not draw back from the work." *Non recuso laborem!* Noble words which ought to be the motto of every Christian, and which was that of the monks for ten centuries.

The influence which the recommendation and guarantee of such a man would exercise in the extension of the monastic order may be easily comprehended. But God decided that he was ripe for heaven: he died, and when his body was carried to the tomb which was to become the most venerated sanctuary in Gaul, two thousand monks formed its funeral train. Sulpicius Severus, his enthusiastic disciple, wrote his life, which soon attained, throughout the West, in the East, and even as far as the Thebaid, a popularity equal to that of the *Life of St. Anthony* by Athanasius, and diffused everywhere at once the glory of the saint and that of the institution which he had loved so much.

Sulpicius Severus. 363-410 or 423.

This Sulpicius Severus, a rich noble of Aquitaine, and an eloquent advocate before he became the disciple of St. Martin, had been the friend of St. Paulinus of Nola. Like the latter, he had given up the world, his fortune, and his career at the bar, had sold his patrimony, and chosen for his dwelling one of his villas in Aquitaine among his slaves, who had become his brothers in *religion*. They lived there together, praying and laboring, sleeping upon straw, eating only brown bread and boiled herbs.

Complaints of the monks of Gaul against the excessive fasts.

It should be remarked to the honor of these first neophytes of the cenobitical order in Gaul, that it cost them a much greater sacrifice to conform themselves to the austerity of this new life, than it did to monks belonging to the naturally temperate popu-

lation of Africa or the Levant. These poor Gauls, accustomed to the abundant and solid food of northern nations, found in confining themselves to the abstinence prescribed by monastic rules, that the rations of the monks of Egypt and Palestine were indeed very meagre. The half-loaves of barley-bread and little handfuls of herbs which sufficed for the meals of the Thebaid, revolted their rebellious stomachs. Doubtless they often heard the beautiful words of St. Athanasius repeated: "Fasting is the food of angels."[134] But it did not satisfy them. "We are accused of gluttony," they said to Sulpicius, "but we are Gauls; it is ridiculous and cruel to attempt to make us live like angels: we are not angels; once more, we are only Gauls."[135] These murmurs did not prevent them from reserving, out of the produce of their labor, enough to support the poor whom they received in a hospice, in order that they might render them the humblest services. It was in this austere retreat that Sulpicius Severus wrote the biography of St. Martin and his *Sacred History*, which extends from the beginning of the world to the year 400, and was the first attempt at ecclesiastical history made in the West.[136]

Lerins: monastic metropolis of the West in the fifth century.

Charity had been the soul of the efforts of St. Martin and his disciples, in the extension of the cenobitic institution upon the banks of the Loire, but it excluded neither the study nor love for sacred literature. Neither the care of the poor, nor the practice of any other monastic virtue suffered by it; yet we see intellectual life, and especially the culture of the defence of Christianity, reigning in a great and celebrated monastery, which was during all the fifth century the centre of monastic life in the south of Gaul, and which merits to itself alone a detailed history.

The sailor, the soldier, and the traveller who proceeds from the roadstead of Toulon to sail towards Italy or the East,

[134] "Jejunium enim angelorum cibus est: qui eo utitur ordinis angelici censendus est." — S. Athanas., *De Virgin.*, lib. ii.

[135] "Prandium sane locupletissimum, dimidium panem hordeaceum . . . fasciculum etiam herbæ intulit. . . . Qui nos edacitatis fatiges: sed facis inhumane, qui nos, Gallos homines, cogis exemplo angelorum vivere . . . quod, ut sæpe testatus sum, Galli sumus." — Sulp. Sever., *Dial.*, i. c. 3.

[136] Another friend of Paulinus and Sulpicius Severus, Aper, like them, rich, noble, and eloquent, retired into solitude with his wife, to live there in continence. It is supposed that this is the same person who afterwards became the first bishop of Toul, and still enjoys popular veneration in Lorraine under the name of St. Evre.

passes among two or three islands, rocky and arid, surmounted here and there by a slender cluster of pines. He looks at them with indifference, and avoids them. However, one of these islands has been for the soul, for the mind, for the moral progress of humanity, a centre purer and more fertile than any famous isle of the Hellenic Archipelago. It is Lerins, formerly occupied by a city, which was already ruined in the time of Pliny, and where, at the commencement of the fifth century, nothing more was to be seen than a desert coast, rendered unapproachable by the numbers of serpents which swarmed there.[137]

St. Honoratus.

In 410, a man landed and remained there; he was called Honoratus. Descended from a consular race, educated and eloquent, but devoted from his youth to great piety, he desired to be made a monk. His father charged his eldest brother, a gay and impetuous young man, to turn him from ascetic life; but, on the contrary, it was he who gained his brother. After many difficulties he at last found repose at Lerins; the serpents yielded the place to him; a multitude of disciples gathered round him. A community of austere monks and indefatigable laborers was formed there. The face of the isle was changed, the desert became a paradise; a country bordered with deep woods, watered by beneficent streams, rich with verdure, enamelled with flowers, embalmed by their perfumes,[138] revealed the fertilizing presence there of a new race. Honoratus, whose fine face was radiant with a sweet and attractive majesty,[139] opened the arms of his love to the sons of all countries who desired to love Christ.[140] A multitude of disciples of all nations joined him. The West could no longer envy the East; and shortly that retreat, destined, in the intentions of its founder, to renew upon the coasts of Provence the austerities of the Thebaid, became a celebrated school of theology and Christian philosophy, a citadel inacessible to the waves of barbarian invasion, an asylum for literature and science,

[137] "Vacuam insulam ob nimietatem squaloris, et inaccessam veneratorum animalium metu." — S. Hilarii, *Vit. S. Honorati*, p. 15, ap. Bolland., t. ii. Januar.

[138] "Aquis scatens, floribus renitens . . . odoribus jucunda, paradisum possidentibus se exhibet." — Eucher., *De Laude Eremi*, p. 342.

[139] *Ibid.*

[140] "Velut ulnis effusis protensisque brachiis in amplexum suum omnes, hoc est in amorem Christi invitabat, omnes undique ad illum confluebant. Etenim quæ adhuc terra, quæ natio in monasterio illius cives non habet?" — Hilar., in *Vit. S. Honorati*, c. 17.

which had fled from Italy invaded by the Goths; in short, a nursery of bishops and saints, who were destined to spread over the whole of Gaul the knowledge of the Gospel and the glory of Lerins. We shall soon see the beams of that light flashing as far as Ireland and England, by the blessed hands of Patrick and Augustine.

There is perhaps nothing more touching in monastic annals than the picture traced by one of the most illustrious sons of Lerins, of the paternal tenderness of Honoratus for the numerous family of monks whom he had collected round him. He could read the depths of their souls to discover all their griefs. He neglected no effort to banish every sadness, every painful recollection of the world. He watched their sleep, their health, their food, their labors, that each might serve God according to the measure of his strength. Thus he inspired them with a love more than filial: "In him," they said, "we find not only a father, but an entire family, a country, the whole world." When he wrote to any of those who were absent, they said, on receiving his letters, written, according to the usage of the time, upon tablets of wax: "It is honey which he has poured back into that wax, honey drawn from the inexhaustible sweetness of his heart." In that island paradise, and under the care of such a shepherd, the perfume of life breathed everywhere. These monks, who had sought happiness by renouncing secular life, felt and proclaimed that they had found it; to see their serene and modest joy, their union, their gentleness, and their firm hope, one could have believed one's self in presence of a battalion of angels at rest.[141]

The churches of Arles, Avignon, Lyons, Vienne, Troyes, Riez, Frejus, Valence, Metz, Nice, Vence, Apt, Carpentras, and Saintes, borrowed from the happy isle, as it was everywhere [142] called, their most illustrious bishops. Honoratus, taken from his monastery to be elevated to the metropolitan see of Arles, had for his successor, as abbot of Lerins,[143] and afterwards, as bishop of Arles, his pupil and relative St. Hilary of Arles.

[141] "Hic alget, hic ægrotat; illi hic labor gravis est, huic hæc esca non congruit. . . . Tabulis, ut assolet, cerâ illitis . . . litteris . . . Mel, inquit, suum ceris reddidit." — HILAR., *op. cit.*, n. 18, 22. "Spirabat passim odor vitæ. . . . Angelica quietis agmen ostendunt. . . . Dum beatam quærunt vitam beatam agunt." — S. EUCHER., l. c.

[142] "Beata illa insula."

[143] After St. Maximus, who was the first successor of Honoratus at Lerins, and afterwards bishop of Riez.

Hilary,[144] to whom we owe the admirable biography of his master. Hilary, whom the gently and tender Honoratus had drawn from worldly life after a desperate resistance, by force of entreaties, caresses, and tears,[145] retained in the episcopate the penitent and laborious life of the cloister of Lerins. He went through his diocese and the neighboring country always on foot and barefooted even in the snow. Celebrated for his graceful eloquence, his unwearied zeal, his ascendency over the crowd, and by the numerous conversions which he worked, he was once at variance with the Pope, St. Leo the Great, who deprived him of his title of metropolitan to punish him for certain uncanonical usurpations; but Hilary knew how to yield, and after his death the Great Pope did him justice by calling him *Hilary of holy memory*.[146]

The doctors and saints of Lerins.

Amongst this harvest of saints, prelates, and doctors, which Lerins gave to Gaul and to the Church[147] there are still several whom it is important to indicate, because they are reckoned among the Fathers, and illuminated all the fifth century with their renown.

Vincent de Lerins.

Before 450.

Holding the first rank among these was the great and modest Vincent de Lerins, who was the first controversialist of his time, and who has preserved to posterity the name of the isle which had been the cradle of his genius.

He composed the short and celebrated work which has gained him immortality, in 434, three years after the Council of Ephesus, and on occasion of the Nestorian heresy which that council had condemned. He would not put his name to it, and entitled it humbly, "Remarks of the Pilgrim," *Commonitorium Peregrini*. In this he has fixed with admirable

[144] St. Honoratus died in 428, and St. Hilary of Arles (who must not be confounded with St. Hilary of Poitiers) in 449. Nothing can better prove the lasting popularity of the memory of St. Honoratus with all the southern races, than the Provençal poem called *Vie de St. Honorat*, written in the thirteenth century by Ramond Ferraud, a monk of Lerins, where the biography of the saint is strangely associated with the romantic traditions of the age of Charlemagne and Girat de Roussillon. — See *Histoire Litteraire de la France*, vol. xxii. p. 237.

[145] "Quamdiù mollire duritiam meam nisus est imbre lacrymarum; quam piis mecum pro salute mea amplexibus osculisque certavit! . . . Quoties sibi in animo meo velle et nolle successit!" — S. Hilar., *op. cit.*, n. 23.

[146] Ep. 37.

[147] See the curious volume entitled, *Chronologia Sanctorum et aliorum Virorum Illustrium ac Abbatum Sacræ Insulæ Lerinensis, a D. Vinc.* Bassali Salerno *compilata*. Leyden, 1613. Besides those who are named in the text, the holy abbot Caprais, Agricola, bishop of Avignon, and Virgilius of Arles, to whom we shall return, ought to be noted.

precision, and in language as decisive as it is simple and correct, the rule of Catholic faith, by establishing it on the double authority of Scripture and tradition, and originating the celebrated definition of orthodox interpretation: *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus creditum est.* After having thus established the immutability of Catholic doctrine, he demands: "Shall there then be no progress in the Church of Christ?" "There shall be progress," he answers, "and even great progress, for who would be so envious of the good of men, or so cursed of God, as to prevent it? But it will be progress, and not change. With the growth of the ages and centuries, there must necessarily be a growth of intelligence, of wisdom, and of knowledge, for each man as for all the Church. But the religion of souls must imitate the progress of the human form, which, in developing and growing with years never ceases to be the same in the maturity of age as in the flower of youth."[148]

Vincent has inscribed at the head of his masterpiece a testimony of his gratitude for the sweet sanctuary of Lerins, which was for him, as he says, the port of religion, when, after having been long tossed about on the sea of this world, he came there to seek peace and study, that he might escape, not only the shipwrecks of the present life, but the fires of the world to come.[149]

Salvian. — 390-484.

With Lerins also is associated the great fame of Salvian, the most eloquent man of his age after St. Augustine, and surnamed the *master of bishops*, though himself only a priest. He passed five years at Lerins; he experienced there the charms of peace and solitude in the midst of the horrors of barbarian invasion, and that frightful corruption of the Roman world, of which he has traced so startling a picture in his treatise upon the *Government of God.*

St. Eucher of Lyons. — About 450.

After these illustrious priests come bishops not less celebrated and holy. And in the first place Eucher, whom Bossuet calls the great Eucher,[150] who was a senator, the father of two sons, and still in the flower of his age, when he retired with his children to Lerins.

[148] "Sed forsitan dicet aliquis: Nullusne ergo in Ecclesia Christi profectus habebitur religionis? Habeatur plane, et maximus." — *Com.*, c. 136.

[149] "Remotioris villulæ, et in ea secretum monasterii incolamus habitaculum. . . . Quippe qui cum aliquandiu variis ac tristibus sæcularis militiæ turbinibus volveremur, tandem nos *in portum Religionis* cunctis semper fidissimum, Christo aspirante, condidimus." — *Præf. in Commonit.*

[150] Second sermon for the *Conception de la Sainte Vierge.*

Already by assiduous study, familiar with the classic models, and versed in all the secrets of the art of writing, he there learned to know the secrets of monastic life; this inspired his eloquent *Panegyric on Solitude*, his treatise *On Contempt of the World and Worldly Philosophy*, and his tender and sprightly correspondence with St. Honoratus. Cassianus dedicated to Eucher, in conjunction with Honoratus, many of his *Collationes*, or conferences upon monastic life, which have had so lasting an influence in the Church; he associated the two friends in his veneration. "Oh, holy brothers," he said to them, "your virtues shine upon the world like great beacons: many saints will be formed by your example, but will scarcely be able to intimate your perfection."[151] Like Honoratus, Eucher was taken from the cloister to the episcopate, and died while occupying the metropolitan see of Lyons.

St. Lupus of Troyes. 383-479.

But the influence of the holy and learned Provençal isle shone still further than Loyns. Thence Troyes chose for its bishop that illustrious St. Lupus, who arrested Attila at the gates of Troyes, before St. Leo had arrested him at the gates of Rome. It was he who demanded of the king of the Huns, "Who art thou?" and who received the far-famed response, "*I am Attila, the scourge of God.*" The intrepid gentleness of the bishop-monk disarmed the ferocious invader. He left Troyes without injuring it, and drew back to the Rhine, but took the bishop with him, thinking that the presence of so holy a man would serve as a safeguard to his army.

St. Lupus undertook a journey perhaps less painful but not less meritorious, when he was chosen for his eloquence and sanctity by the Council of 429 to combat the Pelagian heresy in Great Britain, along with St. Germain of Auxerre. For the fifty-two years during which he held his bishopric, he observed faithfully all the practices of monastic fervor which he had learned at Lerins, and at the same time was warmly interested in the maintenance of ecclesiastical studies, and had a passionate love for literature, which made him keep up to his old age an epistolary correspondence with Sidonius Appollinaris. This eminent scholar, then occupying the episcopal see of Clermont, declared that he never met either barbarism or defect of punctuation in anything written by his venerable brother of Troyes. His virtues and enlighten-

[151] See *Collationes* xi. to xvii. — "Vos sancti fratres . . . velut magna luminaria in hoc mundo admirabili claritate fulgetis."

ment earned for him the praise of being, in the emphatic but sincere style of the period, "the father of fathers, the bishop of bishops, the prince of the prelates of Gaul, the rule of manners, the pillar of virtue, the friend of God, the mediator for men with Heaven."[152]

St. Cæsarius of Arles. 470-542.

Some years before the death of St. Lupus, another saint, Cæsarius,[153] the son of the Count de Chalons, was born in Burgundy, and passed his youth in the shadow of the cloisters of Lerins before succeeding the first fathers of the holy isle, Honoratus and Hilary, upon the archiepiscopal see of Arles. He was for nearly half a century the most illustrious and the most influential of the bishops of Southern Gaul; he presided over four councils, and directed the great controversies of his time. He maintained nobly the independent and protecting authority of the episcopate against the barbarian sovereigns who occupied Provence by turns, and whose jealousy was roused by his great influence over the people. He was exiled by Alaric, king of the Visigoths, and imprisoned by Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths; but both ended by rendering him justice and homage. He was passionately loved by his flock; he swayed their hearts by that eloquent charity, of which the hundred and thirty sermons he has left us bear the stamp.[154]

His rule for nuns.

But he continued always a monk, in heart, life, and penitence.[155] He even made out, for the use of various communities of men, a sort of rule, in twenty-six articles, less celebrated, less detailed, and less popular than that which he wrote for the great monastery of women, with which he endowed his metropolitan town. He was laboring with his own hands at the construction of this sanctuary, when Arles was besieged in 508 by the Franks and Burgundians, who ruined all that he had done, and employed the materials which he had collected for their works of circumvallation. But as soon as the siege was raised, Cæsarius resumed his work and completed it. And the better to insure

[152] He is thus styled by Sidonius Apollinaris in a letter (epist. vi. 1) in which he recalls his youth spent at Lerins: "Post desudatas militiæ Lerinensis excubias." Elsewhere he calls him, "Facile principem pontificum Gallicanorum" (epist. vii. 13).

[153] Born in 470, a monk at Lerins in 490, a bishop in 501, died August 27, 542.

[154] M. Guizot has given some fine and curious extracts from the sermons of St. Cæsarius. — (*Histoire de la Civilisation en France*, leçon 16.)

[155] "Nunquam Lerinensium fratrum instituta reliquit: ordine et officio clericus: humilitate, charitate, obedientia, cruce monachus permanet." — CYPRIANUS, *De Vit. S. Cesarii*, i. 4.

the future prosperity of this refuge, which he raised amid the foaming waves of the barbarian invasion, like an ark in the midst of the deluge,[156] he procured a confirmation of his foundation from Pope Hormisdas, who, at his express desire, exempted it even from episcopal jurisdiction. He made his own sister Cæsaria the abbess, who governed it for thirty years, and shortly gathered there two hundred nuns. This brave Christian woman caused to be prepared, and ranged symmetrically round the church of the monastery, stone coffins for herself and for each of the sisters. They all lived and sang day and night the praises of God in presence of the open tombs which awaited them.

It was into this church that Cæsarius himself, feeling his end approach, had himself conveyed to bless and console his daughters. And certainly, at that last moment, he did not forget his dear island of Lerins, that metropolis of monastic fervor, the glory of which he proclaimed in these impassioned words — "O happy isle, O blessed solitude, in which the majesty of our Redeemer makes every day new conquests, and where such victories are won over Satan! . . . Thrice happy isle, which, little as she is, produces so numerous an offspring for heaven! It is she who nourishes all those illustrious monks who are sent into all the provinces as bishops. When they arrive, they are children; when they go out, they are fathers. She receives them in the condition of recruits, she makes them kings. She teaches all her happy inhabitants to fly towards the sublime heights of Christ upon the wings of humility and charity. That tender and noble mother, that nurse of good men, opened her arms to me also; but while so many others owe heaven to her teaching, the hardness of my heart has prevented her from accomplishing her task in me." [157]

The Abbey of St. Victor at Marseilles.

Another monastic metropolis upon the same coasts of Provence, the Abbey of St. Victor at Marseilles, rivalled Lerins in importance. This abbey was built in the midst of those great forests which had supplied the Phœnician navy, which in the time of Cæsar reached as far as the sea-coast, and the mysterious obscurity of which

[156] "Quasi recentior temporis nostri Noe, propter turbines et procellas, sodalibus vel sororibus in latere Ecclesiæ monasterii fabricabat arcam." — Act. SS. Bolland., t. vi. Aug., p. 70.

[157] "Beata et felix insula Lyrinensis, . . . quos accipit filios reddit patres, . . . quos velut tirones (*aliter*, tyrannos) excipit, reges facit. . . . Voluit præclara mater, et unica et singularis bonorum nutrix." — S. Cæsarii, N° 25, ap. *Bibl. Max. Patr.*, viii. 845.

had so terrified the Roman soldiers that the conqueror, to embolden them, had himself taken an axe and struck down an old oak.[158] It was built over the grotto where the holy martyr Victor, a Roman legionary, had been buried, at the end of the third century. It thus connected with the holy memory of the age of martyrs the more pacific, but still hard and incessant, labors of the new confessors of the faith. Its founder was John Cassianus, one of the most remarkable personages of the time. Born, according to the common opinion, in the country of the Scythians, according to others, at Athens, or even in Gaul,[159] he was first a monk at Bethlehem, and then in Egypt, where he dwelt seven years among the hermits of Nitria and of the Thebaid. He has left us a close and fascinating picture of their life.[160] He went afterwards to Constantinople to find St. John Chrysostom, who ordained him a deacon, and sent him to Rome to plead his cause with Pope Innocent I. At Rome he became the friend of St. Leo the Great before his elevation to the papacy, and at his request wrote a refutation of the heresy of Nestorius against the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Cassianus. 350-447.

Having thus surveyed all the sanctuaries and studied the saints, he came to Marseilles and founded there the great Monastery of St. Victor,[161] which shortly reckoned five thousand monks, partly within its own walls and partly among the houses reared in the shadow and under the influence of this new sanctuary.

It was to instruct and discipline this army of monks that Cassianus wrote the four books of *Institutions*, and the twenty-four *Conferences* or *Collationes*. These two works have immortalized his name, and retain the first rank among the codes of monastic life. In some he describes, even to its minutest details, the manner of living, of praying, and of self-

[158] Ruffi, *Histoire de Marseille*, 1696, t. i. p. 26. — De Ribbe, *La Provence au point de vue des bois*, etc., 1857, p. 23.

[159] This is the opinion of Holstenius, which Mabillon seems to adopt. — Compare J. B. Quesnay, *Cassianus Illustratus*.

[160] Extract from his *Collationes*, which forms the fourth book of the collection of P. Rosweyde.

[161] In this abbey there were two churches, one built over the other; the lower or subterranean is understood to have been consecrated by St. Leo the Great, at the request of his friend Cassianus. Ruined by the Saracens in the ninth century, and re-established by William, vicomte of Marseilles, the abbatial basilica was re-dedicated in 1043 by Pope Benedict IX., who came expressly from Rome to perform that ceremony, in presence of twenty-three bishops and ten thousand laymen.

mortification, which he had seen practised by the hermits of the Thebaid and Palestine. In others he develops their internal life, their mind, and their supernatural wisdom.

Cassianus had no desire that his monastery should be like Lerins, a kind of seminary for priests and bishops of the neighborhood. Although he had been himself ordained a deacon by St. John Chrysostom, and a priest by Pope Innocent I., he was disposed to maintain and increase the ancient barrier which separated the monks from the secular clergy. He recommended the monks to avoid bishops, because the latter sought every occasion to impose upon them some ecclesiastical office in the world. "It was the advice of the Fathers," says he, "an advice always in season, that a monk should at all hazard flee from bishops and women; for neither women nor bishops permit a monk whom they have once drawn into their friendship to remain peacefully in his cell, nor to fix his eyes upon pure and heavenly doctrine, by contemplating holy things." [162]

But the Christian nations made a successful movement against those prohibitions of primitive fervor. They ardently sought, as priests and bishops, men trained in the monastic sanctuaries. And it was bishops and priests from the cloisters of St. Victor and of Lerins, who gave to the clergy of Gaul, in the fifth century, that theological science and moral consideration, in which prelates, taken from the Gallo-Romanic aristocracy, without having passed through monastic life, were too often deficient.

However, the Church, which during all the fourth century had to contend against Arianism, encountered, in the fifth, a new and not less serious danger in Pelagianism. After having denied the divinity of the Redeemer, heresy aimed a mortal blow at his doctrine and at Christian virtue, by denying the necessity of grace. Pelagius, the author of this heresy, was a Breton monk; his principal disciple was also a Breton, Celestius,[163] a monk like himself. Their dreadful error was long contagious. St. Augustine devoted all his knowledge and talent to confute it, and it was soon proscribed by the Church.

[162] "Neuter enim sinit eum quem semel suæ familiaritati devinxerit vel quieti cellulæ ulterius operam dare," &c. — *Institutiones*, lib. xi. c. 17. Cassianus fell into some errors of doctrine; but as he died before the condemnation of his erroneous tenets, he was not the less regarded as a saint by a great number of the faithful.

[163] They preached at Rome about 405, and in Africa about 411. Absolved by the Council of Jerusalem in 415, they were condemned at Carthage and at Mileve, in 416 and 418. After 418 there is no further mention of Pelagius.

It has been asserted that this heresy found some support in the great monasteries of Southern Gaul, the services and merits of which have just been glanced at. Attempts have been made to prove that Pelagian opinions had their principal centre in the Monastery of Lerins, and that Cassianus, after the condemnation of Pelagius, invented semi-Pelagianism. Happily no charge is more unfounded; and the silence of the Roman Church, then, as ever, so vigilant in the defence of orthodoxy, sufficiently absolves those whom modern historians have perhaps intended to honor by an imputation which they themselves would have rejected with horror. One defender of semi-Pelagianism alone proceeded from Lerins, the celebrated and virtuous Faustus, Bishop of Riez, who, besides, was not condemned till after his death. But Lerins equally produced St. Cæsarius, who gave the last blow to that error in the Council of Orange in 529.[164] It is, however, an undoubted certainty that, in the celebrated abbeys of St. Victor and Lerins, all the great questions of free-will, predestination, grace, and original sin, were studied and discussed with the attention and energy which became the holy life of these solitaries, and that this noble school of Lerins, while divided according to the individual predilections of its writers between the supporters and the adversaries of Cassianus and St. Augustine, sought to reconcile intelligence and freedom, in the highest possible degree, with grace and faith. Lerins was besides ardently devoted to Catholic unity, and to the authority of the Church; all its doctors give evidence of this in their writings, and one of the most illustrious, St. Hilary of Arles, as has been seen, by his dutiful submission to the sentence pronounced against him.

Pelagianism falsely imputed to Lerins.

Thus enlightened by the double light which St. Martin had called forth in the West, and the school of Lerins in the south, there rose by degrees throughout all the provinces of Gaul, monasteries which came to console her invaded cities and rural districts, devastated by the incessant incursions of the Goths, Burgundians, and Franks. It is pleasant to trace back to the illustrious Bishop of Auxerre, St. Germain,[165] whose popularity in Gaul and Italy almost equalled that of St. Martin, the origin of a

Other monasteries in Gaul.

St. Germain of Auxerre.

[164] Gorini, *Défense de l'Eglise contre les Erreurs Historiques*, t. i. p. 76.

[165] Born at Auxerre in 380, made a bishop in 418, died at Ravenna in 448. According to the Bollandists, there were almost as many churches bearing his name as that of St. Martin.

monastery which bears his name, in his episcopal city, and which became one of the most celebrated abbeys of France in the middle ages.[166]

Reomaus, or Moutier-St.-Jean, in Burgundy. About 450.

Not far from Auxerre, upon the confines of Eduens and Lingons, in the country already occupied by the Burgundians, and which was destined to bear their name, might be seen, between the Serain and Armançon, one of these deserts which were formed under the Roman administration. There was built the Abbey of Réome, which is considered the most ancient in Burgundy, and which has since, and up to our own days, been called Moutier-St.-Jean,[167] after its founder. This founder was the son of a senator of Dijon, with whom is associated one of those delightful tales which then began to spread throughout Gaul, and which prove the gradual victory of Christian morals over the hearts and imaginations of men, amid the struggles of barbarism with Roman decrepitude. His name was Hilary, or *the Joyous*, and that of his wife Quieta, or *the Tranquil*. The tenderness of their conjugal union, and the regularity which reigned in their house, excited the admiration of the inhabitants of Dijon. When the senator died, he was interred in a marble tomb which he had prepared for himself and his wife, and the splendor of which, an age later, dazzled Gregory of Tours, who has transmitted the story to us. Quieta rejoined him there at the end of a year; and when the covering of the sepulchre was raised to let down the body of the widow, the spectators cried out that they saw the husband extend his hand to encircle the neck of his wife, and all withdrew transported with admiration at that miracle of a conjugal tenderness which lasted even in the tomb.[168] The son of this exemplary couple, John, introduced

[166] See the *Histoire de l'Abbaye de St. Germain d'Auxerre*, by M. l'Abbe Henry, curé de Quarré-les-Tombes. 1853.

[167] Of the vast and beautiful church of Moutier-St.-Jean, bought and destroyed in 1790 by one of the last monks, named Grouyn, there has remained, for ten years, only a very fine lateral gate, spared by chance, which stands isolated in the middle of a garden, a fine specimen of the architecture of the fourteenth century. No traces remain, however, of the noble west front, engraved by Dom Plancher, in the *Histoire de Bourgogne*, vol. i. p. 516. This digression touching a monastery, forgotten like so many others, will be pardoned to one who writes these lines not far from its ruins, and who constantly frequents the woods which were burdened by an act of John, lord of La Roche-en-Breny, in 1239, with a tithe accorded to the Religious of Reomaus. The forest cantons named in that act still retain their old names of *Dos d'Ane* and *Bruyère de Valère*. Compare P. Roverius (Father Royer), *Reomaus, seu Historia Monasterii S. Joannis Reomaensis*. Paris, 1637, quarto, p. 265.

[168] "Sepulcrum ejus quod hodie patefecit . . . marmore pario sculptum. . . . Subito elevata vir dextra conjugis cervicem amplectitur. Quod admi-

monastic life into Burgundy, and at the same time began the cultivation of the plains of Auxois, now so fertile and well cleared, but then covered with impenetrable forests. John, and some companions who had joined him, courageously set to work. The axes with which they cut down the trees in the immediate neighborhood of their retreat, were stolen from them to begin with.[169] A trifling matter, doubtless, and in appearance unworthy of history, but which gains interest from the thought that the work thus thwarted has succeeded by the sole strength of perseverance in well-doing, and has lasted thirteen centuries.[170]

Monasteries of Auvergne.

At a still earlier period, Auvergne had attracted attention by the sanctity of its monks. It was the heart of Gaul; it was the country of the young Vercingetorix, the first hero of our history, so pure, so eloquent, so brave, and so magnanimous in misfortune, whose glory is all the rarer and dearer to good hearts from having been revealed to us only by his pitiless conqueror. The beautiful plain of the Limagne, overlooked by the table-land of Gergovie, where Cæsar met his only check, had attracted by turns the admiration and covetousness of all its invaders. Enervated by imperial despotism, those Gauls who had conquered Rome before they were conquered by her, and who had resisted with so much heroism the legions of Cæsar, could only bow without resistance under the yoke of the Barbarian conquerors. The Vandals had not spared Auvergne in that frightful invasion in the early part of the fifth century, of which St. Prosper of Aquitaine has said, that if the entire ocean had overflowed upon the fields of Gaul, its vast waves would have made fewer ruins.[171] The Visigoths followed, bearing with them Arianism and persecution, condemning the bishops and priests to apostasy or martyrdom, giving up all the sanctuaries to sacrilegious devastation, and leaving after them, according to the testimony of Sidonius Apollina-

rans populus . . . cognovit quæ . . . inter ipsos dilectio fuisset in sæculo, que se ita amplexi sunt in sepulcro." — Greg. Turon., *De Gloria Confess.*, c. 42.

[169] Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 614.

[170] John went to Lerins, when already an old man, to be instructed in the practices of monastic life; which did not prevent him from teaching his monks to adopt as their rule *The Institutes of the Egyptian Fathers.* — *Ibid.* He died more than a hundred years old, in 539.

[171] "Si totus Gallos sese effudisset in agros
Oceanus, vastis plus superesset aquis . . .
Omnes ultima pertulimus."
S. Prosp. Aquit., *De Provid. Divin.*, p. 618, ed. Migne.

ris, cattle ruminating in the roofless vestibules, and eating grass beside the overthrown altars.[172] But, amidst those lamentable servitudes, a new life and liberty began to appear. Christian fervor had taken root there; it disputed the empire of souls with Roman corruption; it produced all those acts of virtue, courage, and abnegation which live in the narratives of Sidonius Apollinaris and Gregory of Tours.

Towards 260. Before the East had revealed monastic institutions to the West, before St. Martin, before even the peace of the Church, the Roman Austremonius, one of the seven bishops sent into Gaul by Pope Fabian, had planted numerous Christian associations among the forests preserved and consecrated by Druidical superstition, and at the foot of the extinguished volcanoes of Auvergne. Issoire was the first of these foundations, and at the same time the place of his

295. own retreat, and the scene of his martyrdom. The history of his successor Urbicus, and of that fatal night when the wife whom he had left to become a bishop came to reclaim her place in the bed of the dishonored priest,

312. is known.[173] Withdrawn from his see after this scandal, he found in one of these new monasteries an asylum and a tomb, which he shared with his wife and the daughter who was born to them.

Most of the modern cities and villages of Auvergne owe their origin to communities[174] which were formed during the invasions of the fifth and sixth centuries, and where the Auvergne Catholics, whose rather effeminate civilization has been described by Sidonius Apollinaris, took refuge from the Arian persecution, and the calamities of which they were too submissive victims. One of these, founded about 525, received the name of *the Arverne monastery*, as if all the nationality of the country had taken refuge there. They were soon joined there by the Visigoths, who, when once converted, willingly mingled with the Gallo-Romans to serve together the God of the Gospel, and the Son of God equal with the Father. Some came from a still greater distance, for a her-

[172] "Ipsa, proh dolor! videas armenta non modo semipatentibus jacere vestibulis, sed etiam herbosa viridentium altarium latera depasci." — SIDON. APOLLIN., *Epist.* vii. 6.

[173] GREG. TURON., *Hist. Franc.*, t. i. c. 44.

[174] Among others, Issoire, Randan, Brioude, Thiers, Combronde, Mauriac, Menat, Ebreuil, &c. An excellent work of M. Branche, *L'Auvergne au Moyen Age*, the first volume of which alone has appeared, and which is exclusively devoted to the monasteries of this province, may be consulted with advantage, concerning the beginning of the monastic order in Auvergne.

mit of the Thebaid, born in Syria, and persecuted by the Persians, is known to have ended his days in a cell near Clermont.[175]

Anchorites and even *stylites* appeared there as in the deserts of Mesopotamia and the country of Trèves, where Gregory of Tours met with a Lombard monk who had long lived upon the top of a pillar, from which he preached the faith to the people, braving the intemperance of a sky less clement than that of the East.[176] In the monastery of Randan, the same Gregory knew a priest who constantly maintained a standing position, and whose feet were diseased[177] in consequence. From thence he went to render homage to a monk called Caluppa, who passed his life in a cavern, at the top of one of the peaks of Cantal, a prey to ecstasies and diabolical temptations. Some herdsmen had one day seen from a great distance an old man kneeling on the top of a hill, his arms raised towards heaven. They disclosed his existence without being able to address him, for even when the bishops came to visit him, this austere solitary would only permit them to approach the foot of his rock, whilst he, kneeling on the ledge of his grotto, received at that height their address and benediction.[178]

Foundation of Condat (since St. Claude) in the Jura.

Long before that recent growth of the great monastic tree, and as long as it lasted, a new centre of monastic life arose in the eastern extremity of Gaul, upon those hills of Jura which separate Gaul from Switzerland, and in the heart of the province Sequanaise, which, after having been the scene of the first exploits of Cæsar on this side of the Alps, was to become the Thebaid of the Gauls. A native of Sequanaise named Romain, trained at the monastery of Ainay, near Lyons, left at the age of thirty-five his father's house, and, carrying with him the *Lives of the Fathers of the Desert*, and some tools and seeds of vegetables, made his way into the high mountains and inhabited forests which overlook his native country, found a site enclosed between three steep heights, at the confluence of two streams, and there founded, under the name of Condat, a monastery destined to become one of the most celebrated in the West. The soil was little adapted for cultivation, but in consequence of its difficult access, became the property of

[175] Sidon. Apollin., *Epist.* vii. 17.

[176] See the history of Wulflaich, related by Gregory of Tours, *Hist. Franc.*, viii. 15, and translated by M. Guizot, *Hist. de la Civilisation en France*, leç. 14.

[177] *Hist. Franc.*, iv. 32.

[178] *Vit Patr.*, c. 11.

the first occupant.[179] He found shelter at first under an enormous fir-tree, the thick branches of which represented to him the palm which served the hermit Paul in the desert of Egypt for a tent; then he began to read, to pray, and to plant his herbs, with a certainty of being protected against the curious and importunate by the extreme roughness of the paths which crossed those precipices, and also by the masses of fallen and interlaced trees called *chablis*, such as are often met with in fir woods not yet subjected to regular care and tendance.

His solitude was disturbed only by the wild animals, and now and then by some bold huntsman.[180] However, he was joined there by his brother Lupicin and others, in so great a number that they were soon obliged to spread themselves and form new establishments in the environs.[181] The two brothers governed these monasteries together, and maintained order and discipline not without difficulty among the increasing multitude of novices, against which an old monk protested, complaining that they did not even leave him room to lie down in. Women followed, as they always did; and upon a neighboring rock, suspended like a nest at the edge of a precipice,[182] the sister of our two abbots ruled five hundred virgins so severely cloistered, that having once entered into the convent they were seen no more, except during the transit of their bodies from the deathbed to the grave.

The two brothers Romain and Lupicin.

As for the monks, each had a separate cell; they had only the refectory in common. In summer they took their siesta under the great firs, which in

Austere lives of the monks of Condat.

[179] This right of the first occupant lasted upon the heights of the Jura through all the middle ages, and was recognized as ancient custom in a charter of 1126. — Guillaume, *Hist. de Salins*, v. i., proofs, p. 36. The chronicle in verse republished by Mabillon (*Annal.*, v. i. appendix, No. 3) evidently influenced by more modern ideas, declares the forest of the Jura, situated between the Rhone and Ain, to belong only to the Empire, and not to be comprised in any kingdom.

[180] "Porrectis in orbitam ramis densissimam abietem, quæ . . . velut quondam palma Paulum, texit ista discipulum. Congeries arborum caducarum. . . . Nullo, nisi ferarum et raro venantium frueretur aspectu." — *Vit. S. Romani*, ap. Act. SS. Bolland., d. 28 Feb., p. 741. Compare *Vie des Saints Francs-Comtois*, by the professors of the college of St. Francis Xavier; Besançon, 1855 — an excellent collection which we shall often quote, the best of the kind which has appeared since the revival of Catholic studies.

[181] The first of these colonies was Lauconne, a league from Condat, which is now the village of St. Lupicin. Another, according to the most probable opinion, gave birth to the abbey of Romain-Moutier, beyond the Jura, towards Lake Leman, of which we shall speak hereafter.

[182] This site is now occupied by the church of *St.-Romain-de-Roche*, where repose the relics of the holy founder of Condat.

winter protected their dwelling against the snow and north wind. They sought to imitate the anchorites of the East, whose various rules they studied daily, tempering them by certain alleviations, which were necessitated by the climate, their daily labor, and even by the constitution of the Gaulish race. They wore sabots and tunics of skins, slightly tacked together, which protected them from the rain, but not from the rigorous cold of these bleak heights, where people are, says their biographer, at once crushed and buried under the snow, whilst in summer the heat produced by the reflection of the sun upon the perpendicular walls of rock is insupportable. Lupicin surpassed them all in austerity; he slept in the trunk of a tree, hollowed out in the form of a cradle; he lived only upon pottage made of barley-meal ground with the bran, without salt, without oil, and without even milk; and one day, disgusted by the delicacy of his brethren, he threw indiscriminately into the same pot the fish, the herbs, and the roots, which the monks had prepared apart and with some care. The community was greatly irritated, and twelve monks, whose patience was exhausted, went away. Upon this an altercation arose between the two brothers. "It would have been better," said Romain to Lupicin, "that thou hadst never come hither, than come to put our monks to flight." "Never mind," answered Lupicin, "it is the straw separating from the corn; these twelve are proud, mounted upon stilts, and God is not in them." However, Romain succeeded in bringing back the fugitives, who all became in their turn superiors of communities.[183]

For a colonizing fertility soon became the manifest characteristic of this new republic: and it is in reference to Condat and its children, if I do not deceive myself, that monastic annals employ for the first time, the trite but just image of the swarm of bees from the hive to describe the colonies of monks which went forth from the mother monastery to people the Sequanaise and the neighboring provinces

[183] "Non solum nivibus obruta, sed sepulta . . . ita æstuantia alterno vicinoque saxorum vapore conflagrant." — *Vit. S. Rom.*, p. 742; *Ib.*, p. 743. "Frustra enormitate convertentium delectaris. . . . Diebus æstivis sub arbore solito quiescenti." — *Vit. S. Eugendi*, c. 14, ap. BOLLAND. "Lignea tantum sola, quæ vulgo *soccos* vocitant monasteria Gallicana." — *Vit. S. Lupicini*, ap. BOLLAND., d. 21 Mart., p. 263. "Hordaceas incretasque pultes, absque sale vel oleo . . ." — *Vit. S. Roman.*, loc. cit. "Si sic futurum erat . . . utinam nec accessisses. . . . Duodecim viri cothurnati atque elati . . ." — GREG. TURON., *Vit. Patrum*, i. 7, 8. This last incident happened at Romain-Moutier; "in illis Alemaniæ regionibus," says Gregory of Tours.

with churches and monasteries.[184] They all recognized the authority of the two brothers; they already excited the admiration of orthodox Christians. Sidonius Apollinaris, whose cultivated mind loved to keep on a level with all contemporary events, knew and praised the solitudes of the Jura, and congratulated their inhabitants on finding there a foretaste of the joys of Paradise.[185]

450-460. Towards the end of Romain's life, a child of seven years old was brought to him, who was destined one day to succeed him, and to give for several centuries his St. Eugende. name to Condat.[186] Eugende, fourth abbot, substituted a common dormitory, where he himself slept, 496-510. to the separate cells of the monks, and specially occupied himself in promoting the work of education in the community. Greek and Latin literature was taught there with success, not only to the future monks, but to youths destined to return to the world; and Condat became the first school of Sequanie, and one of the most celebrated in Gaul. Study of the ancient orators[187] was united to the work of transcribing manuscripts, under the direction of Viventiole. Viventiole, the friend of the celebrated St. Avitus, bishop of Vienne, whose eloquence he corrected, and whose barbarisms he noted, in that curious correspondence which all literary historians have recorded.

These intellectual labors did not imply their abandonment of manual work, and Viventiole sent to his friend a chair of boxwood made by his own hands, which marks the beginning of that valuable branch of industry, still existing, after the lapse of fourteen centuries, in the cottages of Jura.[188] Avitus answered him gracefully: "I wish you a chair in

[184] "Cæperunt exinde venerabilia Patrum exanima, velut ex refecto apum alveario, spiritu sancto ructante, diffundi . . . ita ut non solum Sequanorum provinciæ loca secretiora . . ." — *Vit. S. Rom.*, loc. cit.

[185] "Nunc ergo Jurensia si te remittunt jam monasteria, in quæ libenter solitus ascendere, jam cœlestibus præludis habitaculis." — Sidonii, lib. iv. Ep. 25.

[186] Condat bore the name of St. Eugende or St. Oyand up to the twelfth century, and even in certain public acts up to the sixteenth. It is under this name that St. Bernard recommends this abbey to Eugenius III. (Ep. 291). It afterwards took the name of St. Claude, and then of another abbot, of whom mention will be made further on.

[187] "Præter Latinis voluminibus etiam Græca facunda." — *Vit. S. Eugend.*, c. 3. "De priscis oratoribus quos discipulis merito traditis." — *S. Avit.*, Ep. 71.

[188] Boxwood grew then in abundance on the mountains round St. Claude. This precious wood has now disappeared, and has to be brought from Switzerland, or even from Russia, to supply the workshops.

return for the seat which you have sent me." The prophecy was accomplished when Viventile became metropolitan of Lyons in the beginning of the sixth century, and by the nomination of Avitus. Towards 514.

Influence of the monks on the Burgondes.

All those districts situated between the Rhone and the Rhine, and overshadowed by the Jura and Alps, were then occupied by the Burgondes, a race whose manners were gentler and more pure than any of the other Barbarian races, and who, becoming Christians and remaining orthodox till about the year 500, treated the Gauls less as conquered subjects than as brothers in the faith.[189] They were naturally much under the influence of the monks of Condat, and that ascendency was exercised, as everywhere, for the benefit of the oppressed. Lupicin, already broken by age, went to the Burgonde king Chilperic,[190] who resided at Geneva, to plead with him the cause of some poor natives of Sequanaise, who had been reduced into slavery by a subordinate potentate.[191] This petty tyrant was one of those degenerate Romans, courtiers and oppressors, who, sometimes in the name of the decrepid power of the Emperor, sometimes by flattering the newborn authority of the Barbarian kings, equally found means of trampling on and spoiling their inferiors. He was perhaps one of those senators of Gaul whom the Burgondes had admitted in 456 to a share of the conquered soil:[192] and Lupicin, although of Gallo-Roman origin, seems to have been less favorably disposed towards Roman government than that of the Barbarians. Gregory of Tours has recorded a tradition which well depicts the impression made upon the popular imagination by this apparition of the monks confronted with the triumphant Barbarians. He relates that when Lupicin crossed the threshold

Lupicin at the court of King Chilperic.

[189] Paul Orose, *Hist.*, lib. vii. c. 32. — They became Arians only under Gondebaud in 490, and returned to Catholicism under Sigismund in 515. It is not with a puerile affectation of archaicism that I use the word *Burgondes*: I believe this designation to be natural and necessary to mark the first establishment of this race in the countries which have retained their name, and to distinguish the first kingdom of Burgundy from the kingdoms which bore the same name under the Merovingians, and afterwards the Carlovingians. The same difference exists between the Burgondes and Burgundians, as between the Franks and the French.

[190] Chilperic I., uncle of Chilperic II., father of St. Clotilde.

[191] "Pro afflictione pauperum quos persona quædam honore dignitatis aulicæ tumens . . . illicitæ servitutis jugo subdiderat." — *Vit. S. Lupicini*, loc. cit., p. 265.

[192] "Eo anno Burgundiones partem Galliæ occupaverunt, terrasque cum Gallis senatoribus diviserunt." — Marii. *Chronic.*

of the palace of Chilperic, the throne upon which the king was seated trembled, as if there had been an earthquake.[193] Reassured at the sight of the old man clothed with skins,[194] the Burgonde prince listened to the curious debate which arose between the oppressor and the advocate of the oppressed. "It is then thou," said the courtier to the abbot — "it is thou, old impostor, who hast already insulted the Roman power for ten years, by announcing that all this region and its chiefs were hastening to their ruin." "Yes, truly," answered the monk, pointing to the king, who listened — "yes, perverse traitor, the ruin which I predicted to thee and to thy fellows, there it is. Seest thou not, degenerate man, that thy rights are destroyed by thy sins, and that the prayer of the innocent is granted? Seest thou not that the fasces and the Roman purple are compelled to bow down before a foreign judge? Take heed that some unexpected guest does not come before a new tribunal to claim thy lands, and thy domains."[195] The king of the Burgondes not only justified the abbot by restoring his clients to liberty, but he overwhelmed him with presents, and offered him fields and vineyards for his abbey. Lupicin would only accept a portion of the produce of these fields and vineyards, fearing that the sentiment of too vast a property might make his monks proud. Then the king decreed that they should be allowed every year three hundred measures of corn, three hundred measures of wine, and a hundred gold pieces for their vestments; and the treasury of the Merovingian kings continued to pay these dues long after the fall of the kingdom of the Burgondes.[196]

The importance of the social and political part taken by the abbot Lupicin is also proved by the curious narrative of his intervention in the prosecution raised by Egidius, the representative of imperial authority in Gaul, against the

[193] "Tremuit cathedra regis, exterritusque ait suis: Terræ motus factus est." — *De Vit. Patr.*, c. l, n. 10.

[194] "Senem in veste pellicea." — *Ibid.*

[195] "Tu es ille dudum noster impostor . . . cum civilitatis Romanæ apicis arrogans derogares. . . . Ecce, perfide et perverse, . . . Nonne cernis . . . nutare muriceos pellito sub judice fasces? Respice paulisper et vide utrum rura et jugera tua novus hospes inexpectata jurisdictione." — *Vit. S. Lupicini*, p. 265. The authors of the *Vie des Saints de Franche-Comté* perfectly acknowledge, contrary to the opinion of Perreciot (*De l'Etat Civil des Personnes*, vol. ii. p. 34), that he acted here as a Gallo-Roman, and not as a Burgundian landowner.

[196] "Agros et vineas non accipiemus. . . . Quod usque nunc a fiscidition-ibus capere referuntur." — Greg. Turon., l. c.

Count Agrippinus, accused before the Emperor Majorian of having treated with the Barbarians. The abbot of Condat, who was the friend of this Count, and like him favorable to the Barbarians, became his *fidejussor* or security, and was accepted as such by Egidius, who kissed his hand as he put it into that of the Count.[197]

The King Sigismund founds Agaune, monastic metropolis of the kingdom of Burgundy. 515-522.

Fifty years later, another Burgundian king, Sigismund, after having renounced Arianism and restored freedom to the Church in his kingdom, desired to build up the ruins of the monastery of Agaune, and sought at once in Condat and Lerins for monks to inhabit it. This new sanctuary was built at the entrance of the principal passage of the Alps, in one of the finest landscapes in the world, at the spot where the Rhone, having ended the first stage of its course, escapes by the gorges of the Valais to precipitate its muddy waters into the limpid azure of the Lake of Geneva. It was built in honor of the spot where St. Maurice and the Theban legion suffered martyrdom, having been stopped there, and preferring to die rather than to massacre the Christians who had risen in the great national insurrection of the Bagaudes against the frightful oppression of Roman conscriptions and taxes.[198] Their relics were collected there and deposited in a church more than once crushed by the fall of the rocks, between the masses of which the impetuous stream with difficulty forces a passage. Agaune took and has retained to the present day the name of St. Maurice.[199] It was from that time the monastic metropolis of the kingdom of Burgundy, so often destroyed and so often restored. A hundred monks descended from Condat to inhabit it; their former abbot, Viventiole, then bishop of Lyons, assisted by his friend Avitus, presided at the ceremony of inauguration, and established, in a discourse which has been preserved to us, the principal conditions of the manner of life which the brethren were to lead there. The monks of Condat and Agaune followed for some time the same rule;[200] the same mind and discipline thus reigned from

[197] *Vita S. Lupicini*, pp. 266, 267.

[198] Compare Act. SS. Bolland., d. Sept. 22, pp. 336, 342, 347; Rettberg, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, vol. i. p. 96. This last author has very justly characterized that insurrection.

[199] This abbey, which has belonged since the year 1128 to the Regular Canons, is still in existence.

[200] Known as the *Rule of Tarnate:* this was the ancient name of Agaune, which some authors believe to have been founded two centuries before Sigismund, or at least since 478. Great uncertainty, however, remains respecting all rules prior to that of St. Benedict.

north to south in the Burgundian dominions. But Sigismund gave greater splendor to his foundation. By the liberality of his gifts, as many as nine hundred monks could be collected there, who, divided into nine choirs, sang alternately, and without intermission, the praises of God and the martyrs. This was called the *Laus perennis*, and it will be seen that the great Burgundian monastery was not the only one from which that tide of prayer gushed forth, keeping no silence night nor day. King Sigismund added himself to the number of this incessant choir, when he became a monk, to expiate the crime which he, like Constantine, had committed in sacrificing the son of his first marriage to the treachery of his second wife. How he perished, with all his family, slain by the son of Clovis, is well known.

522-23.

The monk Severin exercises the same ascendency on the banks of the Danube.

If, from the Rhone to the Danube, and from Savoy to Pannonia, we follow the Roman frontier, at all points encroached on and broken through, we shall always find monks at the post of honor and danger, of devotedness and salvation. Already we have seen them in conflict with the Goths, the Franks, and the Burgondes. Let us recognize them upon the path of the Germanic races, whom Attila had temporarily drawn out of their natural course, the Thuringians, the Alemans, the Rugians, the Herules, who were about to overleap the last obstacles, and give the last blow to the phantom of the empire. Their influence was specially apparent in the life of Severin, written by one of his disciples, and brought to light in our own days by Ozanam, a writer full of charm and authority, who scarcely leaves anything to be gleaned wherever he has passed.

420?-482.

Severin had established himself in Noricum, in these countries which have since become Bavaria and Austria, and inhabited a monastery near the present site of Vienna. He would never disclose the place of his birth; but his language denoted a Latin origin, and his life proved that he had dwelt long in the monastic deserts of the East,[201] before introducing cenobitical life on the banks of the Danube. Several centuries passed, however, before monastic life bore here its full fruits. But to Severin remains, in the grateful recollection of the people and the Church, the merit of its beginning.

A true physician and shepherd of souls, he devoted his wonderful activity and treasures of courage, patience, and

[201] *Vit. S. Severin.*, *auct.* Eugippio, ap. Bolland., d. 8 Jan., p. 485.

skill, to maintain the faith in those provinces which were already almost entirely Christian, to preserve the life and goods of the invaded population, and to convert the conquering bands whose barbarism was aggravated by the Arian heresy. He repeatedly directed with success the military defence of Roman cities besieged by the Barbarians : and when victory was declared, as it usually was, for the latter, he occupied himself with unwearied solicitude in alleviating the fate of the captives, in feeding and clothing them. Hardy as he was by means of fast and mortification, he hungered when they were hungry, and shivered when the cold seized upon their naked forms.[202] He seemed to have inspired Barbarians and Romans, on both banks of the great river which no longer guarded the territory of the empire, with equal veneration, and the king of the Alemans, subdued by the sight of that dauntless charity, having offered him the choice of any favor he pleased, Severin asked of him to spare the lands of the Romans and set his prisoners at liberty. He held the same influence over the king of the Rugians, another tribe which had come from the shores of the Baltic to establish themselves in Pannonia. But the wife of this king, more ferocious than himself, and wildly heretical besides, attempted to deter her husband from following the advice of the abbot, and one day when he interceded for the poor Romans whom she had sent into servitude beyond the Danube, she said to him : " Man of God, keep thyself calm to pray in thy cell, and leave us to do what seems good to us with our slaves."[203] But he was unwearied in his efforts, and almost always ended by triumphing over these savage yet still uncorrupted souls. Feeling his end approach, he called the king and queen to his deathbed. After having exhorted the king to remember the reckoning which he should have to render to God, he put his hand upon the heart of the Barbarian and turned to the queen : " Gisa," said he " lovest thou this soul better than silver or gold ? " And as Gisa protested that she loved her husband better than all treasures : " Well then," said he " cease to oppress the just, lest their oppression be your ruin. I entreat both of you humbly, at this moment when I

[202] " Studiosius insistebat Barbarorum ditione vexatos genuinæ restituere libertati. . . . Esurie miserorum se credebat afflictum. . . . Frigus quoque vir Dei tantum in nuditate pauperum sentiebat." — *Vit. S. Severin.*, pp. 488, 491.

[203] " Conjux ferialis et noxia, nomine Gisa. . . . Ora tibi, serve Dei, in cellula tua delitescens, et liceat nobis de servis nostris ordinare quod volumus." — *Ibid.*, p. 488.

am returning to my master, to abstain from evil, and to do yourselves honor by your good deeds." The history of invasions," adds Ozanam, "has many pathetic scenes, but I know nothing more instructive than the death of this old Roman, expiring between two Barbarians, and less moved by the ruin of the empire than by the peril of their souls." [204]

Meeting of Severin with Odoacer.

But it is his meeting with the German chief who was destined to overturn the dishonored throne of the Roman emperors, which has specially preserved from oblivion the memory of Severin. Among the Barbarians who, on their way to Italy, voluntarily arrested their course to ask the benediction of the saint, in whom they instinctively honored a greatness born to survive all that they were about to destroy, came one day a young Herule, poorly clad, but of noble race, and so tall that he had to stoop his head to enter the cell of the monk. "Go," said Severin to him, "go to Italy; now thou wearest but sorry furs, but shortly thou shalt be able to make gifts." This young man was Odoacer. At the head of the Thuringians and Herules, he took possession of Rome, sent Romulus Augustulus to die in exile, and, without condescending to make himself emperor, was content to remain master of Italy. In the midst of his conquest, he remembered the prediction of the Roman monk whom he had left upon the banks of the Danube, and wrote to him, desiring him to ask all that he would. Severin took advantage of this to obtain the pardon of an exile.[205]

476.

It is pleasant to see this sweet and holy memory hovering over the catastrophe which terminates the shameful annals of old Rome, enslaved and degraded under her vile Cæsars, and which opens the history of modern Europe.

Position of the cenobitical institution at the end of the fifth century.

Thus, from the middle of the fifth century, the cenobitical institution, proceeding from the Thebaid, has occupied one by one all the provinces of the Roman empire, and encamped upon all the frontiers to await and win the Barbarians.

The immense services which this institution has rendered

[204] *Etudes Germaniques*, t. ii. p. 42, ed. of 1849.

[205] "Dum se, ne humile tectum cellulæ suo vertice contingeret, inclinaret. . . . Vade ad Italiam, vilissimis nunc pellibus coopertus, sed multis cito plurima largiturus. . . . Familiares litteras dirigens . . . memor illius præsagii. . . . Ambrogium quemdam exulantem rogat absolvi." — *Vit. S. Sev.*, p. 494. Compare Leo, *Ursprung und Werden des Deutschen Reichs*, p. 320.

to the Church, the new and necessary force which it has lent to society, fainting between the avenging embrace of the Germans, and the despicable languor of expiring imperialism, may be already appreciated.

The monks were from that period the direct instruments, after the papacy, of the salvation and honor of Europe. They rendered her capable of that gigantic and supernatural effort against the inveterate paganism of the old world and the impetuous current of the northern invaders. Contemporaries themselves perceived it: no one disputed the solemn testimony of the priest Rufinus, who was not himself a monk, but who had long studied and observed them: "There is no doubt that without these humble penitents the world could not have retained its existence." [206]

Services rendered by the monks to Christian society during the invasion of the Barbarians.

Everything around them was calculated to sow terror and despair. On one side, the savage hordes of a hundred hostile nations filled Gaul, Italy, Spain, Illyria, Africa, all the provinces in their turn, with blood and horror: and after Alaric, Genseric, and Attila, a well-founded presentiment of the final fall of Rome and the Empire increased in all hearts every day. On the other hand, Arianism, with its implacable and multiplied obstinacy, and the many heresies which succeeded each other without intermission, rent the Church, disturbed consciences, and made men believe in a universal overturn. When the judgments of God appeared in the beginning of the fifth century, the world lost its senses. Some plunged into debauchery to enjoy like brutes the last remnant of happiness; others sank into incurable melancholy.

The lovers of solitude, the men of penitence, sacrifice, and voluntary humiliation, alone knew how to live, hope, resist, and stand fast. To those who reproach the monkish spirit with enervating, debasing, and making sluggards of men, let it suffice to recall what monks were in these days of desolation and despair. They alone showed themselves equal to all necessities and above all terrors. Human courage has never been more tried than among the monks; it has never displayed greater resources nor more constancy: it has never showed itself more manful and unshakable.

They opposed to the successive waves of the Barbaric invasion an insurmountable barrier of virtue, courage, patience, and genius; and, when all external resistance was found im-

[206] "Ut dubitari non debeat ipsorum meritis adhuc stare mundum." — RUFFINI, Prolog. in *Vit. Patr.*, lib. ii.

possible and useless, it was found that they had formed, for all the germs of civilization and the future, shelters which the floods might pass over without ingulfing them. In the midst of that deluge which annihilated Roman Europe and the ancient world, they concentrated themselves in a high and pure sphere, which was destined to survive all that chaos, and from which life was to descend upon a new world.

Their courage was only surpassed by their charity, by their tender and inexhaustible compassion for all the miseries with which they saw the world overwhelmed. They loved their neighbors passionately, because they loved God more than themselves. They drew the secret of this love and supernatural force from Christian self-renunciation, from the voluntary expiation of their own faults and the faults of others. In opposing poverty, chastity, and obedience, the three eternal bases of monastic life, to the orgies of wealth, debauchery, and pride, they created at once a contrast and a remedy. In sacrificing by a spirit of mortification, all permitted privileges, marriage, property, and the free disposition of their time and their life, they became the guardians and saviours of those who justly desired to retain these legitimate possessions, and who saw them exposed, in so desperate a condition of society, to irremediable outrages.

But let us not mistake regarding this. They never dreamt of making that exceptional life the common rule. They knew that it could only be the privilege of certain souls, more entirely penetrated than the rest by the blood of the Saviour. They did not assume to impose their evangelical counsels as precepts upon all. They remained faithful to the interpretation of the sacred text, which has never varied from the first popes until now. Their leaders always resisted the excesses of intemperate zeal in the Gnostics and others, who would have rendered obligatory upon all that which was only possible for some. Doubtless, certain events, certain lives, might be quoted which seem to lean towards excess; but there are excesses inseparable from the force and vigor of all great movements of the soul, and which only serve to reveal the existence of a vital and fertile current. In their hearts, and on the whole, they remained sheltered from all unregulated exaltation, firmly attached to apostolic traditions and the infallible prudence of the Church. They had no tendency, such as they have been accused of having, to transform the entire universe into a cloister: they desired only to create and maintain, by the side of the storms and

failures of the world, the home, the refuge, and the school of a peace and strength superior to the world.

This was the cause of their powerful action upon the world from that period. In vain had they fled from men, for men followed them. All the good heart, high mind, and clear intellect, which remained in this fallen society, rallied round the monks, as if to escape from universal ruin. Their spirit breathed from the depths of the deserts upon towns, upon schools, and even upon palaces, to light them again with some gleams of vigor and intelligence. The distracted people sought them, listened to them, and admired them, though understanding them little, and imitating them still less. But their existence alone was the most energetic protest against pagan materialism, which had ended by depraving all souls, and by undermining the social constitution of the Old World. They awoke in man all those intellectual and moral forces which could aid him to strive against the unheard of calamities of the time. They taught him to struggle against that empire of sensuality which was to be so painfully expiated under the yoke of the Barbarians. They showed him at once the road to heaven and that of the future in this world, the sole future possible to these long-enervated races, a regeneration by suffering, voluntarily accepted and courageously endured.

They did not limit themselves to prayer and penitence: they spoke, they wrote much; and their masculine genius, their young and fresh inspiration, prevented the new Christian world from falling back from its first advances, either by literature or politics, under the yoke of exhausted paganism. The Fathers trained in the school of monastic life preserved the public mind, in these ages of transition, from the danger which it ran of allowing itself to be overborne and taken advantage of by scholars, elegant, but puerile and behind the age, whose dream was the reconstruction of a society which should find types in the pagan authors, such as Ausonius and Symmachus, and have for its heads and emperors apostates or Arians, such as Julian and Valens.

Among the populations degraded by the imperial yoke, the monks represented freedom and dignity, activity and labor. These were, above all, free men who, after having divested themselves of their patrimonial possessions, lived less by alms than by the produce of their labor, and who thus ennobled the hardest toils of the earth before the eyes of that degenerate Roman world in which agriculture was almost

exclusively the portion of slaves.[207] They alone recalled to the world the noble days of Cincinnatus, the dictator who was taken from the plough!

How St. Augustine repressed the criminal folly of those who would have substituted a pious idleness for that labor which the first Fathers of the desert gave so glorious an example of, and which all monks continue to practise with an unwearied zeal, has been seen. Thanks to them, and despite the ravages of the Barbarians and the indifference of the Romans, the lands of Egypt, Africa, and Italy, the most fertile and longest cultivated in the world, retained some traces of their ancient fruitfulness, till the time when the monks were to go to clear the countries which had been until then beyond the reach of all cultivation.

They are still regarded as laymen, and do not form part of the clergy.

But the Church claimed them still more strongly than the world. In their origin, despite the tonsure and the black robes which distinguished them from laymen, monks formed no part of the clergy, and were not reckoned among ecclesiastical persons. St. Jerome, in several passages of his writings, declares that the monks ought to be like other laymen, submissive and respectful not only to the priests, but also to all the members of the clerical profession. They then formed a sort of intermediate body between the clergy and the faithful, like a formidable reserve of trained Christians.[208] The secular clergy were to see in them an ideal which it was not given to all to attain, but the presence of which alone constituted a check upon any falling away of the ministers of the Lord.[209] From the depths of their solitude, at Nitria as at Lerins, they also mixed actively in all the great controversies which diffuse so much life through the history of the fourth and fifth centuries. They were always found in the first rank of the armies of orthodoxy. In vain had their first founders endeavored to interdict them from accepting ecclesiastical dignities,[210] or even holy orders. From the earliest times they were drawn forcibly from their retreats to be ordained priests and bishops by the voice of the people, and by the enlightened choice of pastors such as Athanasius.

[207] Compare Michelet, *Histoire de France*, vol. i. lib. 1, c. 3.

[208] A passage in the life of St. Basil shows this distinction between the clergy and monks: "Mane facto, convocato *tam* venerabili clero *quam* monasteriis et omni Christo amabili populo, dixit eis," &c. — Amphilochii Episc. Iconii, *Vit. S. Basilii*, c. 8, ap. Rosweyde.

[209] Moehler, *Geschichte des Monchthums*, p. 2.

[210] St. Pacome formally forbade it in his rule.

The number of priests in their ranks soon increased, from which came the greatest bishops of Christendom, Basil, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Martin of Tours. This has not been sufficiently attended to; the Fathers of the Church, the great doctors of that primitive age, all, or almost all, proceeded out of the monastic ranks. Excepting St. Hilary of Poitiers, St. Ambrose, and St. Leo the Great, all the other Fathers and all the doctors of these two centuries were monks, or trained in monasteries. We have already reckoned among them the four great doctors of the Eastern Church, Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom, and Gregory of Nazianzus; and in the Western Church, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Fulgentius, Sulpicius Severus, Vincent of Lerins, John Cassianus, Salvian, St. Cæsarius of Arles, and afterwards St. Gregory the Great. No literature offers to the admiration of men greater names than these. Their writings remain the arsenal of theology. They have presided over the development of doctrine and all the primitive history of the faith. That alone should be enough to assure an ever glorious place to the monastic order in the annals of the Church and the world. But it was not destined to stop there. Its part was only beginning. For a thousand years longer none of the great names of the Church shall be strangers to it; for a thousand years it shall inscribe its name at the head of all the great pages of history.

However, nearly all the Fathers and doctors of the Church proceeded from their ranks.

But at the period of which we speak, the monks were not the first, but the only, strong and great. Under a sway which united excess of license with excess of servitude, amidst political abjectness and social decrepitude, they alone were found worthy, pure, and intrepid, the sole orators, writers — in a word, the only men who preserved an independent standing. Thus they crossed the immense remnant of enslaved nations, and marched with a tranquil and steady step to the conquest of the future.

In this new world which began to dawn, they replaced two wonderful phenomena of the ancient world — the slaves and the martyrs: the slaves, by their indefatigable activity and heroic patience; the martyrs, by a living tradition of self-devotion and sacrifice. The long struggle which had vanquished the Roman empire without transforming it, was then to be continued under other names and other forms, but with the same power and success. An instinctive consciousness of this glorious succession

The monks replaced the slaves and the martyrs.

must have existed in the mind of the unknown writer who commenced the biography of a Gallo-Roman monk of the sixth century with these words: "After the glorious combats of the martyrs, let us celebrate the merits of the confessors; for they also have conquered and lived only for Christ, and to them death has been gain; they have also become heirs of the heavenly Jerusalem. Now the camps and citadels of the soldiers of Christ shine everywhere. Now the King of heaven proclaims everywhere the titles and extends the glory of these numerous athletes, whose inanimate ashes triumph still over the enemy of the human race." [211]

Abuses and disorders.

Let us, however, be on our guard against a blind enthusiasm and partial admiration. Shadows were not wanting to this picture, nor blots in this light.

The monks were not always nor everywhere without reproach. All contemporary chronicles prove that from that time a considerable number of men, strangers to the true spirit of the monastic condition, stole in among them, not to speak of those whom the desire to escape slavery or famine drove into their ranks. We are obliged to admit that, even in this period of robust and glorious youth, disorders and abuses infected the monasteries. But from the first these were denounced, reprimanded, and stigmatized by the most illustrious among the cenobites or apologists of the monastic institution, St. Jerome, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Augustine. The greatest and most serious of these disorders, that which was most repugnant to the fundamental spirit of the institution, and at the same time that which threatened to increase with the greatest rapidity, in spite of the severe decrees of the Council of Chalcedon,[212] was the passion for change and motion which drew bands of monks to the great roads and public places of the empire, there to give themselves up to all kinds of unwonted and boisterous demonstrations. Under the name of *Messalians* or of *Gyrovagues*, they passed their life in wandering from province to province, from cell to cell, remaining only three or four days in one place, living on alms extorted from the faithful, who were often scandalized by their bad morals, always

Gyrovagues.

[211] "Post gloriosos igitur agones martyrum, præclara recoluimus confessorum merita. Ecce autem undique resplendens castra militum Christi: ubique rex ille singulares titulos martyrum et confessorum suorum defixit, per quorum etiam exanimatos cineres de hoste humani generis triumphat . . . inter numerosa agmina athletarum." — *Prolog. Vit. S. Launomari*, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. C., p. 339.

[212] See before, page 219.

wandering and never stable, enslaved to their passions and to all the excesses of conviviality; in short, according to the testimony of the greatest of monks, living such a life that it was better to keep silence than to speak of it.[213]

Sarabaïtes.

Others existed elsewhere, named in the Egyptian language Sarabaïtes, and who, to quote again the testimony of the reformer whose strongest laws were intended for their defeat, carried the stamp of the world into the cell, "like molten lead, and not like gold tried in the furnace." They lived two or three together, without rule or leader, caring only for their own flocks, and not for the sheep of the Lord, taking their own desires and enjoyments as a law, declaring holy all that they thought and preferred, and holding all that displeased them as prohibited.[214]

Multiplicity and diversity of rules.

These unworthy monks, "whose shaven heads lied to God,"[215] found encouragement for their wandering and disorderly life in the absence of any uniform rule or legislation imposed and approved by the Church.

Most of the great leaders of the cenobitical institution had, since St. Pacome, made out, under the name of Rule, instructions and constitutions for the use of their immediate disciples; but none of these works had acquired an extensive or lasting sway.[216] In the East, it is true, the rule of St. Basil had prevailed in a multitude of monasteries, yet notwithstanding Cassianus, in visiting Egypt, Palestine, and Mesopotomia, found there almost as many different rules as there were monasteries.[217] In the West, the diversity was still more strange. Each man made for himself his own rule and discipline, taking his authority from the writings or example of the Eastern Fathers.[218] The Gauls especially exclaimed against the extreme rigor of the fasts and abstinences, which

[213] "Tota vita sua per diversas provincias ternis aut quaternis diebus per diversarum cellas hospitantur, semper vagi, et nunquam stabiles, sed propriis voluptatibus et gulæ illecebris servientes, et per omnia deteriores Sarabaïtis: de quorum omnium miserrima conversione melius est silere quam loqui." — *Reg. S. Bened.*, c. 1.

[214] "Monachorum teterrimum genus est Sarabaïtarum, qui nulla regula approbati, experientia magistri, sicut aurum fornacis, sed in plumbi natura molliti adhuc operibus servantes seculo fidem . . . non dominicis, sed suis inclusi ovilibus, pro lege eis est desideriorum voluptas . . ." — *Ibid.*

[215] "Mentiri Deo per tonsuram noscuntur." — *Ibid.*

[216] Those who desire to have an idea of these premature and partial efforts have only to consult the *Disquisitiones Monasticæ* of P. Hæften, lib. i. tract. 3, 4, and 5; Anvers, 1644, folio.

[217] "Tot propemodum typos ac regulas usurpatas vidimus, quot monasteria cellasque conspeximus." — Cassian., *Instit.*, lib. ii. c. 2.

[218] See before, the example of St. John, founder of Réome, p. 283, note 170.

might be suitable under a fervid sky like that of Egypt or Syria, but which could not be endured by what they already called *Gallican weakness;*[219] and even in the initial fervor of the monasteries of the Jura, they had succeeded in imposing a necessary medium upon their chiefs. Here, it was the changing will of an abbot; there, a written rule; elsewhere, the traditions of the elders, which determined the order of conventual life. In some houses various rules were practised at the same time, according to the inclination of the inhabitants of each cell, and were changed according to the times and places. They passed thus from excessive austerity to laxness, and conversely, according to the liking of each.[220] Uncertainty and instability were everywhere.

The monastic institution was not constituted.

We have, therefore, committed a sort of anachronism in speaking, up to this point, though in conformity with the language of contemporary authors, of the *monastic order*. A general arrangement was precisely what was most wanting in monastic life. There were an immense number of monks; there had been among them saints and illustrious men; but to speak truly, the monastic order had still no existence.[221]

Even where the rule of St. Basil had acquired the necessary degree of establishment and authority — that is to say, in a considerable portion of the East — the gift of fertility was denied to it. The distinctive character of the institutions and creeds of the East — which, after a first impulse, last without increasing, and remain stationary for ages, like trees planted in the shade which have roots but no fruit, and vegetate indefinitely without either rise or extension — might be remarked in it from that time.

In the West also, towards the end of the fifth century, the cenobitical institution seemed to have fallen into the torpor and sterility of the East. After St. Jerome, who died in 420, and St. Augustine, who died in 430, after the Fathers of Lerins, whose splendor paled towards 450, there was a kind of eclipse. Condat still shone alone upon its heights of the Jura up to the beginning of the sixth century; but illustri-

[219] "Ista pro qualitate loci et instantia laboris invicta, potius quam Orientalium perficere affectamus, quia procul dubio efficacius hæc faciliusque natura vel infirmitas exequitur infirmitas Gallicana." — *Vit. S. Eugend.*, n. 24. Compare with the previous narrative of the protestations against the fasts imposed by Sulpicius Severus on his Gallic monks.

[220] Mabillon, *Præf. in sæc. I. Benedict.;* Hæften, loc. cit.; D. Pitra, *Hist. de S. Léger, Introduct.*, p. lv.

[221] Compare Dom Pitra, loc. cit., p. liii.

ous cenobites brilliantly occupying the first rank in the polemics and developments of Christian life, were no longer to be seen as formerly. Except in Ireland and Gaul, where, in most of the provinces, some new foundations rose, a general interruption was observable in the extension of the institution, whether because the final triumph of the Barbarian invasion had stifled for a time the efforts of zeal, and troubled the fountain of life at which these victorious races were to assuage their thirst, or that intervals of apparent inaction are necessary to the creations of Christian genius as to the forces of nature, in order to prepare them for the decisive evolutions of their destiny.

If this eclipse had lasted, the history of the monks of the West would only have been, like that of the Eastern monks, a sublime but brief passage in the annals of the Church, instead of being their longest and best-filled page.

This was not to be: but to keep the promises which the monastic order had made to the Church and to the newborn Christendom, it needed at the beginning of the sixth century, a new and energetic impulse, such as would concentrate and discipline so many scattered, irregular, and intermittent forces; a uniform and universally accepted rule; a legislator inspired by the fertile and glorious past, to establish and govern the future. God provided for that necessity by sending St. Benedict into the world.

BOOK IV.

ST. BENEDICT.

SUMMARY.

State of Europe at the end of the fifth century: debased by the Empire, divided by heresy, and ravaged by the invasions of the Barbarians. — St. Benedict was born in 480, and went into seclusion at Subiaco, the cradle of monastic life. — His trials. — His miracles. — His departure for Monte Cassino: he founds there the principal sanctuary of the monastic order. — Note on the description and history of Monte Cassino. — Life at Cassino. — Relations with the nobility. — Solicitude for the people. — Influence over the Goths. — History of Galla. — Interview with Totila. — The Lombards. — St. Scholastica. — Death of Benedict. — Analysis of his rule: the first made for the West. — Preamble. — Two dominant ideas. — Work. — Obedience qualified by the nature and origin of the command. — Analogy with the feudal system. — Conditions of the community thus organized. — Abdication of individual property. — Novitiate. — Vow of stability. — Roman wisdom and moderation. — Analysis of the details. — Liturgy. — Food. — Clothing. — Penalties. — Services. — Hospitality. — The sick. — Summary of the rule by Bossuet. — Benedict's vision of the world in a single ray. — He did not foresee the social results of his work. — Immensity of these results. — The world is reconquered from the Barbarians by the monks.

> . . . Gli occhi dirizzai
> E vidi cento sperule ch' insieme
> Più s' abellivan con mutui rai.
> Io stava come quei ch' in se repreme
> La punta del disio e non s' attenta
> Di dimandar, sì del troppo si teme.
> E la maggiore e la più luculenta
> Di quelle margherite innanzi fessi
> Per far di se la mia voglia contenta.
> *Paradiso*, c. xxii.

I.—HIS LIFE.

St. Benedict was born in the year of our Lord 480. Europe has perhaps never known a more calamitous or apparently desperate period than that which reached its climax at this date.

State of Europe at the end of the fifth century.

Confusion, corruption, despair, and death were everywhere; social dismemberment seemed complete. Authority, morals, laws, sciences, arts, religion herself, might have been supposed condemned to irremediable ruin. The germs of a splendid and approaching revival were still hidden from all eyes under the ruins of a crumbling world. The Church was more than ever infected by heresy, schisms, and divisions, which the obscure successors of St. Leo the Great in the Holy See endeavored in vain to repress. In all the ancient Roman world there did not exist a prince who was not either a pagan, an Arian, or a Eutychian. The monastic institution, after having given so many doctors and saints to the Church in the East, was drifting toward that descent which it never was doomed to reascend; and even in the West, as has just been seen, some symptoms of premature decay had already appeared. Thus, indeed, the monks gave too often an example of disorder and scandal as well as the rest of the clergy.

In temporal affairs, the political edifice originated by Augustus — that monster assemblage of two hundred millions of human creatures, "of whom not a single individual was entitled to call himself free" — was crumbling into dust under the blows of the Barbarians.

In the West, the last imperial phantom had just disappeared. Odoacer, the chief of the Herules, had snatched the purple of the Cæsars from the shoulders of Augustulus in 476, but disdained himself to put it on. He had succeeded in filling up the sink of pollution which called itself the Roman Empire, and in which, for five centuries, the glory and strength of ancient Rome, and the blood and substance of the world conquered by her arms, had been consumed. But Italy, though delivered from that oppressive fiction, remained a prey to successive floods of Barbarians. Already ravaged by Alaric and Attila, she had not enjoyed a breathing-time under the momentary shelter of the genius of Theodoric.

In the East, two theological tyrants disputed the dishonored throne of Constantinople. One of these, Basilicus, had found five hundred bishops to subscribe the anathema which he launched against the pope and the orthodox Council of Chalcedon: the other, Zeno, authorized heresy in his edicts;[1] he exhausted with his spoliations and debaucheries

[1] The *Henoticum*, or edict of union, published in 482, in opposition to the Council of Chalcedon, where the heresy of Eutychus, who held the divinity and humanity of our Lord to be the same nature, had been condemned.

the nations whom he did not even attempt to defend against the Barbarians. Thus commenced a period of miserable and sanguinary disputes, which lasted, without intermission, for thirty-four years, until the advent of the predecessor of Justinian.[2]

In the other parts of Europe, the Barbarians founded states and kingdoms, some of which were destined to be not without distinction, but of which not one belonged even to the Catholic faith.

Germany was still entirely pagan, as was also Great Britain, where the new-born faith had been stifled by the Angles and Saxons. Gaul was invaded on the north by the pagan Franks, and on the south by the Arian Burgundians. Spain was overrun and ravaged by the Visigoths, the Sueves, the Alans, and the Vandals, all Arians. The same Vandals, under the successor of Genseric, made Christian Africa desolate, by a persecution more unpitying and refined in cruelty than those of the Roman emperors. In a word, all those countries into which the first disciples of Jesus Christ carried the faith, had fallen a prey to barbarism, and most frequently to a barbarism which the Arian heresy employed as the instrument of its hatred against the Church. The world had to be a second time reconquered.

Christian souls everywhere saw with terror the formidable prophecies of the ancient law against a false-hearted race realized anew. "Lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling-places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful. . . . Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every stronghold; for they shall heap dust, and take it."[3]

Amidst this universal darkness and desolation, history directs our gaze towards those heights, in the centre of Italy,

[2] Justin I., in 518.

[3] Hab. i. 6–10. "That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten." — Joel i. 4.

and at the gates of Rome, which detach themselves from the chain of the Apennines, and extend from the ancient country of the Sabines to that of the Samnites. A single solitary was about to form there a centre spiritual virtue, and to light it up with a splendor destined to shine over regenerated Europe for ten centuries to come.[4]

Position of Subiaco.

Fifty miles to the west of Rome, among that group of hills where the Anio hollows the deep gorge which separates the country of the Sabines from that once inhabited by the Eques and Herniei, the traveller, ascending by the course of the river, comes to a kind of basin, which opens out between two immense walls of rock, and from which a fresh and transparent stream[5] descends from fall to fall, to a place named Subiaco. This grand and picturesque site had attracted the attention of Nero. He confined the water of the Anio by dams, and constructed artificial lakes and baths below with a delicious villa, which took, from its position, the name of *Sublaqueum*, and of which some shapeless ruins remain. He sometimes resided there. One day, in the midst of a feast, the cup which he raised to his lips was broken by thunder,[6] and this omen filled his miserable soul with unusual terror; Heaven had marked this place with the seal at once of its vengeance and of its mercies.

Benedict hides himself there in his youth.

494.

Four centuries after Nero, and when solitude and silence had long replaced the imperial orgies,[7] a young patrician, flying from the delights and dangers of Rome, sought there a refuge and solitude with God. He had been baptized under the name of Benedictus, that is to say, Well said, or Blessed. He belonged to the illustrious house of Anicius, which had already given so many of its children to monastic life.[8] By his mother's side

[4] All that we know of the life of St. Benedict has come to us from the most authentic source, Pope Gregory the Great. He has devoted book ii. of his *Dialogues* to the life of St. Benedict, relating it as he received it from the lips of four disciples of the holy patriarch, Constantine, Honoratus, Valentinian, and Simplicius, the two first of whom had succeeded him as abbots at Monte Cassino and Subiaco.

[5] "Frigidas atque perspicuas emanat aquas." — S. Gregor., *Dial.* lib. ii. c. 1.

[6] Tacit., *Annal.*, lib. xiv. c. 22.

[7] Nibby, *Topografia die Contorni di Roma;* Januccelli, *Dissertaz. sopra l'Orig. di Subiaco*, 1851.

[8] See above, vol. i. page 228. Compare Hæften., *Disquisit. Monastic.*, 1644, *Proleg.*, 14. Two centuries after his death, the immense ruins of his ancestral palace were still to be seen at the gates of Nursia. — Adrevald., *De Mirac. S. Bened.*, i. 1. Nursia, which was also the country of Sertorius, is now called Norcia.

he was the last scion of the lords of Nursia, a Sabine town, where he was born, as has been said, in 480. He was scarcely fourteen when he resolved to renounce fortune, knowledge, his family, and the happiness of this world. Leaving his old nurse, who had been the first to love him, and who alone followed him still, he plunged into these wild gorges, and ascended those almost inaccessible hills.[9] On the way he met a monk, named Romanus,[10] who gave him a haircloth shirt and a monastic dress made of skins. Proceeding on his ascent, and reaching to the middle of the abrupt rock, which faces to the south, and which overhangs the rapid course of the Anio, he discovered a dark and narrow cave, a sort of den, into which the sun never shone. He there took up his abode, and remained unknown to all except to the monk Romanus, who fed him with the remainder of his own scanty fare,[11] but who, not being able to reach his cell, transmitted to him every day, at the end of a cord, a loaf and a little bell, the sound of which warned him of this sustenance which charity had provided for him.

He lived three entire years in this tomb. The shepherds who discovered him there, at first took him for a wild beast; by his discourses, and the efforts he made to instil grace and piety into their rustic souls, they recognized in him a servant of God.[12] Temptations were not wanting to him. The allurements of voluptuousness acted so strongly on his excited senses, that he was on the point of leaving his retreat to seek after a woman whose beauty had formerly impressed him, and whose memory haunted him incessantly. But there was near his grotto a clump of thorns and briers: he took off the vestment of skins which was his only dress, and rolled himself among them naked, till his body was all one wound, but also till he had extinguished forever the infernal fire which inflamed him even in the desert.[13]

[9] "Despectis literarum studiis, . . . relictis domo rebusque paternis . . . despexit jam quasi aridum mundum cum flore. . . . Quæ hunc arctius amabat, sola secuta est. . . . Per abrupta montium, per concava vallium, per defossa terrarum." — S. Gregor., *l. c.*

[10] The locality of the meeting is indicated by a chapel called *Santa Crocella*, which is still seen between the two monasteries of St. Scholastica and *Sagro Speco*.

[11] Bossuet, *Panégyrique de Saint Benoît.*

[12] "Quem dum vestitum pellibus inter fruteta cernerent, aliquam bestiam esse crediderunt, . . . ad pietatis gratiam a bestiali mente mutati sunt." — S. Gregor., *l. c.*

[13] "Quamdam aliquando fœminam aspexerat, quam malignus spiritus ante ejus mentis oculos reduxit: tantoque igne . . . animum in specie illius accendit, ut dum in ejus pectore amoris flamma vim caperet, etiam pene dese-

St. Francis at Subiaco.

Seven centuries later, another saint, father of the most numerous monastic family which the Church has produced after that of St. Benedict, St. Francis of Assisi, came to visit that wild site which was worthy to rival the bare Tuscan rock where the stigmata of the passion were imprinted on himself.[14] He prostrated himself before the thicket of thorns which had been a triumphal bed to the masculine virtue of the patriarch of the monks, and after having bathed with his tears the soil of that glorious battle-field, he planted there two rose-trees. The roses of St. Francis grew, and have survived the Benedictine briers. This garden, twice sanctified, still occupies a sort of triangular plateau, which projects upon the side of the rock a little before and beneath the grotto which sheltered St. Benedict. The eye, confined on all sides by rocks, can survey freely only the azure of heaven. It is the last of those sacred places visited and venerated in the celebrated and unique monastery of the Sagro Speco, which forms a series of sanctuaries built one over the other, backed by the mountain which Benedict has immortalized. Such was the hard and savage cradle of the monastic order in the West. It was from this tomb, where the delicate son of the last patricians of Rome buried himself alive, that the definite form of monastic life — that is to say, the perfection of Christian life — was born. From this cavern and thicket of thorns have issued legions of saints and monks, whose devotion has won for the Church her greatest conquests and purest glories. From this fountain has gushed the inexhaustible current of religious zeal and fervor. Thence came, and shall still come, all whom the spirit of the great Benedict shall inspire with the impulse of opening new paths or restoring ancient discipline in cloistral life. The sacred site which the prophet Isaiah seems to have pointed out beforehand to cenobites, by words so ma

rere eremum voluptate victus deliberaret. . . . Exutus indumento, nudum se in illis spinarum aculeis et urticarum incendiis projecit, ibique diu volutatus, totus ex eis vulneratus exiit. Ex quo tempore, sicut ipse postea perhibebat, ita in eo est tentatio voluptatis edomita, ut tale aliquid in se minime sentiret." — S. Gregor., *l. c.*

[14] The *Alvernia*, near Chiusi, in the Casentin, where a celebrated monastery indicates the place where the patriarch of the order of minor brothers received the stigmata: —

"Nel crudo sasso intra Tevere ed Arno
Da Cristo prese l' ultimo sigillo
Che le sue membra du' anni portarno."

Dante, *Paradiso*, c. xi.

St. Francis came to Subiaco in 1223.

vellously close in their application — "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit (CAVERNAM LACI) whence ye are digged" — is there recognized by all. We lament for the Christian who has not seen this grotto, this desert, this nest of the eagle and the dove, or who, having seen it, has not prostrated himself with tender respect before the sanctuary from which issued, with the rule and institution of St. Benedict, the flower of Christian civilization, the permanent victory of the soul over the flesh, the intellectual enfranchisement of Europe, and all that charm and grandeur which the spirit of sacrifice, regulated by faith, adds to knowledge, labor, and virtue.[15]

The solitude of the young anchorite was not long respected. The faithful in the neighborhood, who brought him food for the body, asked the bread of life in return. The monks of a neighboring monastery, situated near Vico Varo (the *Vario* of Horace), obtained, by dint of importunity, his consent to become their ruler, but, soon disgusted by his austerity, they endeavored to poison him. He made the sign of the cross over the vessel which contained the poison, and it broke as if it had been struck with a stone. He left these unworthy monks to re-enter joyfully his beloved cavern, and to live by himself alone.[16] But it was vain: he soon found himself surrounded by such a multitude of disciples, that, to give them a shelter, he was compelled to found in the neighborhood of his retreat twelve monasteries, each inhabited by twelve monks.[17] He kept some with him in order to direct them himself, and was thus finally raised to be the superior of a numerous community of cenobites.

[15] Petrarch, who visited Subiaco, says: "Illud immane et devotum specus, quod qui viderunt *vidisse* quodammodo *Paradisi limen* credunt." — *De Vitâ Solit.*, lib. ii. c. 9.

[16] "Cum ei cibum afferrent corporis, ab ejus ore in sua pectora alimenta referebant vitæ. . . . Vas pestiferi potus sic confractum est ac si pro signo lapidem dedisset. . . . Ad locum dilectæ solitudinis rediit, et solus in superni spectatoris oculis habitavit secum." — S. GREG., *l. c.*

[17] See some valuable details of those twelve monasteries in the *Memorie Storiche della S. Grotti di S. Benedetto sopra Subiaco*, by D. VINC. BINI, Abbot of the Sagro Speco, in 1840. Compare YEPES, *Coronica Geral de S. Benito*, ad. n. 510. As to the actual state of the monastery of the Sagro Speco, it is perfectly described in a work by the Abbot M. BARBIER DE MONTAULT, published by the *Annales Archéologiques* of DIDRON, vols. xviii. and xix., 1859. The frescoes and inscriptions which make this sanctuary so precious a monument of Christian archæology, are there described with great exactness. These frescoes, several of which go as far back as the thirteenth century, have been reproduced with minute accuracy in a folio volume, entitled *Imagerie du Sagro Speco*, and published at Rome by an anonymous Belgian, printing-office of the R. C. A., 1855.

Goths among the disciples of Benedict.

Clergy and laymen, Romans and Barbarians, victors and vanquished, alike flocked to him, attracted by the fame of his virtue and miracles. While the celebrated Theodoric, at the head of his Goths, up to that time invincible, destroyed the ephemeral kingdom of the Herules, seized Rome, and overspread Italy, other Goths came to seek faith, penitence, and monastic discipline under the laws of Benedict.[18] At his command they armed themselves with axes and hatchets, and employed their robust strength in rooting out the brushwood and clearing the soil, which, since the time of Nero, had again become a wilderness. The Italian painters of the great ages of art have left us many representations of the legend told by St. Gregory, in which St. Benedict restores to a Goth who had become a convert at Subiaco, the tool which that zealous but unskilful workman had dropped to the bottom of the lake, and which the abbot miraculously brought forth. "Take thy tool," said Benedict to the Barbarian woodcutter — "take it, work, and be comforted." Symbolical words, in which we find an abridgment of the precepts and examples lavished by the monastic order on so many generations of conquering races: *Ecce labora!*[19]

The young patrician monks: Maur and Placidus.

Besides these Barbarians already occupied in restoring the cultivation of that Italian soil which their brethren in arms still wasted, were many children of the Roman nobility whom their fathers had confided to Benedict to be trained to the service of God. Among these young patricians are two whose names are celebrated in Benedictine annals: Maur, whom the abbot Benedict made his own coadjutor; and Placidus, whose father was lord of the manor of Subiaco,[20] which did not prevent his son

[18] It must be remarked, however, that Gothic monks had been seen in the neighborhood of Constantinople from the fourth century, and that St. John Chrysostom had some intercourse with them.— Bulteau, *Hist. Mon. d'Orient*, p. 463.

[19] "Gotthus quidam, pauper spiritu, ad conversionem venit, quem Dei vir Benedictus libentissime suscepit. . . . Ei dari ferramentum jussit, quod falcastrum vocatur, ut de loco quodam vepres abscinderet quatenus illic hortus fieri deberet . . . super ripam laci. . . . Cumque Gotthus idem densitatem veprium totius virtutis annisu succideret. . . . Ecce labora et noli contristari." — S. Greg., c. 6.

[20] The father of Placidus, who was a senator called Tertullus, overwhelmed St. Benedict with territorial donations, and endowed, among others, according to tradition, that great monastery of San Severino, which is still to be seen at Naples, and where the beautiful series of frescoes by Zingaro, which represent the principal events in the life of St. Benedict, are admired. Since we have occasion here to remark these monuments of Christian art,

from rendering menial services to the community, such as drawing water from the lake of Nero. The weight of his pitcher one day overbalanced him, and he fell into the lake. We shall leave Bossuet to tell the rest, in his panegyric, delivered twelve centuries afterwards, before the sons of the founder of Subiaco: "St. Benedict ordered St. Maur, his faithful disciple, to run quickly and draw the child out. At the word of his master Maur went away without hesitation, . . . and, full of confidence in the order he had received, walked upon the water with as much security as upon the earth, and drew Placidus from the whirlpool which would have swallowed him up. To what shall I attribute so great a miracle, whether to the virtue of the obedience or to that of the commandment? A doubtful question, says St. Gregory, between St. Benedict and St. Maur. But let us say, to decide it, that the obedience had grace to accomplish the command, and that the command had grace to give efficacy to the obedience. Walk, my fathers, upon the waves with the help of obedience; you shall find solid support amid the inconstancy of human things. The waves shall have no power to overthrow you, nor the depths to swallow you up; you shall remain immovable, as if all was firm under your feet, and issue forth victorious." [21]

Trials of Benedict.

However, Benedict had the ordinary fate of great men and saints. The great number of conversions worked by the example and fame of his austerity awakened a homicidal envy against him. A wicked priest of the neighborhood attempted first to decry and then to poison him. Being unsuccessful in both, he endeavored, at least, to injure him in the object of his most tender solicitude — in the souls of his young disciples. For that purpose he sent, even into the garden of the monastery where Benedict dwelt and where the monks labored, seven wretched women, whose gestures, sports, and shameful nudity, were designed to tempt the young monks to certain fall. Who does not recognize in this incident the mixture of Barbarian rudeness and frightful cor-

which shed so bright and pure a light over the monuments of history, we may be permitted also to point out the admirable fresco of the church of San Severo, at Peruzzi, in which Raphael, in 1505, still a youth, has represented St. Benedict seated in heaven, and contemplating our Lord, with his two disciples, St. Placidus and St. Maur, by his side; in front of him, St. Romuald and two Benedictine martyrs. It has been perfectly engraved by M. Keller of Dusseldorf, the same to whom we owe the only engraving of the *Dispute du Saint Sacrement*, which is worthy of Raphael's masterpiece.

[21] *Panegyric of St. Benedict.*

ruption which characterize ages of decay and transition? When Benedict, from the threshold of his cell, perceived these shameless creatures, he despaired of his work;[22] he acknowledged that the interest of his beloved children constrained him to disarm so cruel an enmity by retreat. He appointed superiors to the twelve monasteries which he had founded, and, taking with him a small number of disciples, he left forever the wild gorges of Subiaco, where he had lived for thirty-five years.

His departure for Monte Cassino.

529.

Without withdrawing from the mountainous region which extends along the western side of the Apennines, Benedict directed his steps towards the south along the Abruzzi, and penetrated into that Land of Labor, the name of which seems naturally suited to a soil destined to be the cradle of the most laborious men whom the world has known. He ended his journey in a scene very different from that of Subiaco, but of incomparable grandeur and majesty. There, upon the boundaries of Samnium and Campania, in the centre of a large basin, half-surrounded by abrupt and picturesque heights, rises a scarped and isolated hill, the vast and rounded summit of which overlooks the course of the Liris near its fountain head, and the undulating plain which extends south towards the shores of the Mediterranean and the narrow valleys which, towards the north, the east, and the west, lost themselves in the lines of the mountainous horizon. This is Monte Cassino. At the foot of this rock, Benedict found an amphitheatre of the time of the Cæsars, amidst the ruins of the town of Cassinum, which the most learned and pious of Romans, Varro, that pagan Benedictine, whose memory and knowledge the sons of Benedict took pleasure in honoring, had rendered illustrious.[23] From the summit the prospect extended on one

[22] "Vicinæ ecclesiæ presbyter Florentius nomine, hujus nostri subdiaconi Florentii avus. . . . Ita ut in horto cellæ . . . ante eorum oculos nudas septem puellas mitteret, quæ coram eis sibi invicem manus tendentes et diutius ludentes, illorum mentes ad perversitatem libidinis inflammarent. Quod vir sanctus de cella prospiciens . . ." — S. Gregor., c. 8.

[23] "Varro . . . sanctissimus et integerrimus." — Cicero, *Phil.*, ii. "Casinensis arcis sublimitas tanto olim culmine viguit, ut Romani celsitudo imperii philosophicis studiis illam in ævum dicaret. Hanc M. T. Varro omnium Romanorum doctissimus incoluit." — Petr. Diac., *De Vir. Illust. Casin.*

"Nymphisque habitata rura Casini."

Sil. Italic., i. 12.

This town, restored by the monks, now bears the name of San Germano, in honor of a holy bishop of Capua, contemporary of Benedict. Between the town and the monastery, on a detached knoll of the mountain, still rises

side towards Arpinum, where the prince of Roman orators was born, and on the other towards Aquinum, already celebrated as the birthplace of Juvenal, before it was known as the country of the Doctor Angelico, which latter distinction should make the name of this little town known among all Christians.

It was amidst these noble recollections, this solemn nature, and upon that predestinated height, that the patriarch of the monks of the West founded the capital of the monastic order. He found paganism still surviving there. Two hundred years after Constantine, in the heart of Christendom, and so near Rome, there still existed a very ancient temple of Apollo and a sacred wood, where a multitude of peasants sacrificed to the gods and demons.[24] Benedict preached the faith of Christ to these forgotten people; he persuaded them to cut down the wood, to overthrow the temple and the idol. Let us listen to Dante, who has translated, in his own fashion, the narrative of St. Gregory, in that magnificent song of the *Paradise*, where the instructions of Beatrice are interrupted and completed by the apparition of the patriarch of the Western monks: —

"Quel monte, a cui Cassino e nella costa,
Fu frequentato già in su la cima,
Dalla gente ingannata e mal disposta:
Ed io son quel che su vi portai prima
Lo nome di colui che 'n terra adusse
La verità, che tanto ci sublima:
E tanta grazia sovra mi rilusse
Ch' io ritrassi le ville circonstanti
Dall' empio colto, che' l mondo sedusse."

Upon these remains Benedict built two oratories, one dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the first solitary of the new faith; the other to St. Martin, the great monk-bishop, whose ascetic and priestly virtues had edified Gaul, and reached as

the vast castle of Rocca Janula, built in the middle ages, uninhabited, but not in ruins, with its towers and embattled ramparts, which were connected with the enclosures of San Germano by two long walls. Nothing could be more complete and striking than the general appearance of the holy mountain. At the foot, the modern town, with its Roman amphitheatre; half way up, the feudal fortress; at the summit, the immortal monastery, always imposing and majestic, despite the alterations which its architecture has undergone.

[24] "Vetustissimum fanum . . . in quo ex antiquorum more gentilium a stulto rusticorum populo Apollo colebatur circumquaque in cultu dæmoniorum luci succreverunt. . . . Infidelium insana multitudo." — S. Gregor., c. 8.

The archmonastery of the Monte Cassino.

far as Italy. Round these chapels rose the monastery which was to become the most powerful and celebrated in the Catholic universe; celebrated especially because there Benedict wrote his rule, and at the same time formed the type which was to serve as a model to innumerable communities submitted to that sovereign code. It is for this reason that emulous pontiffs, princes, and nations have praised, endowed, and visited the sanctuary where monastic religion, according to the expression of Pope Urban II., "flowed from the heart of Benedict as from a fountain head of Paradise;[25] and which another Pope,[26] who himself issued out of Monte Cassino to ascend the apostolical chair, has not hesitated to compare to Sinai, in these lines of proud and bold simplicity which he engraved upon the altar of the holy patriarch —

> "Hæc domus est similis Sinaï sacra jura ferenti,
> Ut lex demonstrat hîc quæ fuit edita quondam.
> Lex hinc exivit, mentes quæ ducit ab imis,
> Et vulgata dedit lumen per climata sæcli."[27]

[25] "Ipse omnium monachorum pater, et Casinense monasterium caput omnium perpetuo habeatur et merito, nam ex eodem loco de Benedicti pectore monastici ordinis religio quasi de Paradisi fonte emanavit." — *Bulla* URBANI II., *ad Calc. Chron. Casinen.*

[26] Didier, Abbot of Monte Cassino, successor to St. Gregory VII., under the name of Victor III.

[27] LEO OSTIENSIS, *Chr. Casin.*, iii. 27.

I do not undertake here to describe the actual condition of Monte Cassino, nor to retrace its history. I would rather refer, for this description, to two correct and careful notices, one by M. Adolphe de Circourt, in vol. ix. of the *Revue des Deux Bourgognes*, 1839; and the other by M. Dantier, in vol. x. of the *Revue Contemporaine*, 1853. I shall confine myself to indicating here those parts of the immense and splendid abbey which tradition traces to the time of St. Benedict. They are: 1st, the entrance gate, the very low arch of which indicates the yoke of humility under which the law obliged the monks to bend; on which is this inscription — "Fornicem saxis asperum ac depressum tantæ moli aditum angustum ne mireris, hospes. Angustum fecit patriarchæ sanctitas: venerare potius et sospes ingredere;" 2d, the lower portion of the square tower which surmounted this gate, and which is believed to have been the residence of St. Benedict and his first companions, as is inferred in the following inscriptions, placed in two distinct apartments, "Pars inferior turris, in qua S. P. N. Benedictus dum viveret habitabat;" and on one side, "Vetustissimum habitaculum in quo SSmi patriarchæ discipuli quiescebant." In a higher floor of the same turret, another inscription affirms that it was there the saint had the vision of the death of his sister and the Bishop of St. Germain. Outside the monastery, the place consecrated by tradition is shown, where Benedict knelt in prayer before laying the first stone of his new dwelling, and that at which St. Scholastica, his sister and auxiliary, rested, when climbing for the first time to the summit of the rock. With regard to the chief monastery, though it will be perpetually mentioned in the following narrative, it is necessary to refer the curious to the book which a learned and zealous monk of Monte Cassino, Dom Luigi Tosti, pub-

Benedict ended his life at Monte Cassino, where he lived for fourteen years, occupied, in the first place, with extricating from the surrounding country the remnants of paganism, afterwards in building his monastery by the hands of his disciples, in cultivating the arid sides of his mountain,[28] and the devastated plains around, but above all, in extending to all who approached him the benefits of the law of God, practised with a fervor and charity which none have surpassed. Although he had never been invested with the priestly character, his life at Monte Cassino was rather that of a missionary and apostle than of a solitary. He was, notwithstanding, the vigilant head of a community which flourished and increased more and more. Accustomed to subdue himself in everything, and to struggle with the infernal spirits, whose temptations and appearances were not wanting to him more than to the ancient Fathers of the desert,[29] he had acquired the gift of reading souls, and discerning their most secret thoughts. He used this faculty not only to direct the young monks, who always gathered in such numbers round him, in their studies and the labors of agriculture and building which he shared with them; but 520-543.

lished on this subject, in three volumes, at Naples in 1842. We restrict ourselves to the following dates: — Destroyed for the first time by the Lombards in 583, the monastery was restored by the Abbot Petronax, under Gregory II., in 731, and consecrated by Pope Zacharias, in 748. Again destroyed by the Saracens, who massacred the greater part of the monks, in 857; it was rebuilt anew by the Abbot Aligern about 950, and consecrated by Alexander II., in 1071. After many other calamities, it was entirely rebuilt in 1649, and consecrated for the third time by Benedict XIII., in 1727. In the time of its splendor, the abbot was first baron of the kingdom of Naples, and administrator of a special diocese, established in 1321, and composed of 37 parishes. Among his dependencies were reckoned four bishoprics, two principalities, twenty counties, 250 castles, 440 towns or villages, 336 *curtes* or manors, 23 maritime ports, 33 islands, 200 mills, 300 territories, 1662 churches. — HÆFTEN., *Comment. in Vit. S. Bened.*, p. 105. At the end of the sixteenth century, his income was reckoned at the enormous sum of 500,000 ducats. But all this splendor gradually disappeared, first from the effect of the *commende*, of which the Abbey of Monte Cassino became the prey in the fifteenth century, afterwards by the wars and revolutions of Italy. Despoiled and ransomed a last time by the French under Championnet, transformed into a mere library by King Joseph Bonaparte in 1805, it has recovered, since the restoration of the Bourbons, a remnant of life and fortune, which is developing under the fertile atmosphere of the monastic revival which the nineteenth century has the glory of having originated.

[28] "Arida tu cujus hortis componis amœnis,
Nudaque fecundo palmite saxa tegis.
Mirantur scopula fruges, et non sua poma,
Pomiferisque viret silva domata comis."
Carmen de S. Bened., auct. MARCO, *discip.*

[29] S. GREG., *Dial.*, c. 9, 10, 11, &c.

even in the distant journeys on which they were sometimes sent, he followed them by a spiritual observation, discovered their least failings, reprimanded them on their return, and bound them in everything to a strict fulfilment of the rule which they had accepted. He exacted from all the obedience, sincerity, and austerely regulated life of which he himself gave the first example.

Many young men of rich and noble families came here, as at Subiaco, to put themselves under his direction, or were confided to him by their parents. They labored with the other brethren in the cultivation of the soil and the building of the monastery, and were bound to all the services imposed by the rule. Some of these young nobles rebelled in secret against that equality. Among these, according to the narrative of St. Gregory, was the son of a *Defender* — that is to say, of the first magistrate of a town or province. One evening, it being his turn to light the abbot Benedict at supper, while he held the candlestick before the abbatial table, his pride rose within him, and he said to himself, "What is this man that I should thus stand before him while he eats, with a candle in my hand, like a slave? Am I then made to be his slave"[30] Immediately Benedict, as if he had heard him, reproved him sharply for that movement of pride, gave the candle to another, and sent him back to his cell, dismayed to find himself at once discovered and restrained in his most secret thoughts. It was thus that the great legislator inaugurated in his new-formed cloister that alliance of aristocratic races with the Benedictine order of which we shall have many generous and fruitful examples to quote.

He bound all — nobles and plebeians, young and old, rich and poor — under the same discipline. But he would have excess or violence in nothing: and when he was told of a solitary in the neighboring mountains, who, not content with shutting himself up in a narrow cave, had attached to his foot a chain the other end of which was fixed in the rock, so that he could not move beyond the length of this chain, Benedict sent to tell him to break it, in these words, "If thou art truly a servant of God, confine thyself not with a chain of iron, but with the chain of Christ."[31]

[30] "Quis est hic cui ego manducanti assisto, lucernam teneo, servitutem impendo? Quis sum ego uti isti serviam?" — S. Greg., *Dial.*, c. 20.

[31] "Si servus Dei es, non te teneat catena ferrea, sed catena Christi." — *Ibid.*, lib. iii. c. 16.

Intercourse between Benedict and the neighboring population.

And extending his solicitude and authority over the surrounding populations, he did not content himself with preaching eloquently to them the true faith,[32] but also healed the sick, the lepers, and the possessed, provided for all the necessities of the soul and body, paid the debts of honest men oppressed by their creditors, and distributed in incessant alms the provisions of corn, wine, and linen which were sent to him by the rich Christians of the neighborhood. A great famine having afflicted Campania in 539, he distributed to the poor all the provisions of the monastery, so that one day there remained only five loaves to feed all the community. The monks were dismayed and melancholy: Benedict reproached them with their cowardice. "You have not enough to-day," he said to them, "but you shall have too much to-morrow." And accordingly they found next morning at the gates of the monastery two hundred bushels of flour, bestowed by some unknown hand. Thus were established the foundations of that traditional and unbounded munificence to which his spiritual descendants have remained unalterably faithful, and which was the law and glory of his existence.

So much sympathy for the poor naturally inspired them with a blind confidence in him. One day, when he had gone out with the brethren to labor in the fields, a peasant, distracted with grief, and bearing in his arms the body of his dead son, came to the monastery and demanded to see Father Benedict. When he was told that Benedict was in the fields with his brethren, he threw down his son's body before the door, and, in the transport of his grief, ran at full speed to seek the saint. He met him returning from his work, and from the moment he perceived him, began to cry, "Restore me my son!" Benedict stopped and asked, "Have I carried him away?" The peasant answered, "He is dead; come and raise him up." Benedict was grieved by these words, and said, "Go home, my friend, this is not a work for us; this belongs to the holy apostles. Why do you come to impose upon us so tremendous a burden?" But the father persisted, and swore in his passionate distress that he would not go till the saint had raised up his son. The abbot asked him where his son was. "His body," said he, "is at the door of the monastery." Benedict, when he arrived there, fell on his knees, and then laid himself down, as Elijah did in the house

[32] "Doctrinæ quoque verbo non mediocriter fulsit." — S. Greg., *Dial.*, lib. ii. c. 36.

of the widow of Sarepta, upon the body of the child, and, rising up, extended his hands to heaven, praying thus: "Lord, look not upon my sins, but on the faith of this man, and restore to the body the soul thou hast taken away from it." Scarcely was his prayer ended, when all present perceived that the whole body of the child trembled. Benedict took him by the hand, and restored him to his father full of life and health.[33]

He protects them against the Goths.

His virtue, his fame, the supernatural power which was more and more visible in his whole life, made him the natural protector of the poor husbandmen against the violence and rapine of the new masters of Italy. The great Theodoric had organized an energetic and protective government, but he dishonored the end of his reign by persecution and cruelty; and since his death barbarism had regained all its ancient ascendency among the Goths. The rural populations groaned under the yoke of these rude oppressors, doubly exasperated, as Barbarians and as Arians, against the Italian Catholics. To Benedict, the Roman patrician who had become a serf of God, belonged the noble office of drawing towards each other the Italians and Barbarians, two races cruelly divided by religion, fortune, language, and manners, whose mutual hatred was embittered by so many catastrophes inflicted by the one and suffered by the other, since the time of Alaric. The founder of Monte Cassino stood between the victors and the vanquished like an all-powerful moderator and inflexible judge. The facts which we are about to relate, according to the narrative of St. Gregory, would be told throughout all Italy, and, spreading from cottage to cottage, would bring unthought-of hope and consolation into the hearts of the oppressed, and establish the popularity of Benedict and his order on an immortal foundation in the memory of the people.

History of Galla.

It has been seen that there were already Goths among the monks at Subiaco, and how they were employed in reclaiming the soil which their fathers had laid waste. But there were others who, inflamed by heresy, professed a hatred of all that was orthodox and belonged to monastic life. One especially, named Galla, traversed the country panting with rage and cupidity, and made a sport of

[33] "Redde filium meum. . . . Numquid ego filium tuum abstuli? . . . Regrediente anima, ita corpusculum pueri omne contremuit, ut sub oculis omnium qui aderant apparuerit concussione mirifica tremendo palpitasse." — S. Greg., *Dial.*, lib. ii. 32.

slaying the priests and monks who fell under his power, and spoiling and torturing the people to extort from them the little that they had remaining. An unfortunate peasant, exhausted by the torments inflicted upon him by the pitiless Goth, conceived the idea of bringing them to an end by declaring that he had confided all that he had to the keeping of Benedict, a servant of God; upon which Galla stopped the torture of the peasant, but, binding his arms with ropes, and thrusting him in front of his own horse, ordered him to go before and show the way to the house of this Benedict who had defrauded him of his expected prey. Both pursued thus the way to Monte Cassino; the peasant on foot, with his hands tied behind his back, urged on by the blows and taunts of the Goth, who followed on horseback, an image only too faithful of the two races which unhappy Italy enclosed within her distracted bosom, and which were to be judged and reconciled by the unarmed majesty of monastic goodness. When they had reached the summit of the mountain they perceived the abbot seated alone, reading at the door of his monastery. "Behold," said the prisoner, turning to his tyrant, "there is the Father Benedict of whom I told thee." The Goth, believing that here, as elsewhere, he should be able to make his way by terror, immediately called out with a furious tone to the monk, "Rise up, rise up, and restore quickly what thou hast received from this peasant." At these words the man of God raised his eyes from his book, and, without speaking, slowly turned his gaze first upon the Barbarian on horseback, and then upon the husbandman bound, and bowed down by his bonds. Under the light of that powerful gaze the cords which tied his poor arms loosed of themselves, and the innocent victim stood erect and free, while the ferocious Galla, falling on the ground, trembling, and beside himself, remained at the feet of Benedict, begging the saint to pray for him. Without interrupting his reading, Benedict called his brethren, and directed them to carry the fainting Barbarian into the monastery, and give him some blessed bread; and, when he had come to himself, the abbot represented to him the extravagance, injustice, and cruelty of his conduct, and exhorted him to change it for the future. The Goth was completely subdued, and no longer dared to ask anything of the laborer whom the mere glance of the monk had delivered from his bonds.[34]

[34] "Avaritiæ suæ æstu succensus, in rapinam verum inhians . . . ejus

Interview between Benedict and Totila.

542.

But this mysterious attraction, which drew the Goths under the influence of Benedict's looks and words, produced another celebrated and significant scene. The two principal elements of reviving society in their most striking impersonation — the victorious Barbarians and the invincible monks — were here confronted. Totila, the greatest of the successors of Theodoric, ascended the throne in 542, and immediately undertook the restoration of the monarchy of the Ostrogoths, which the victories of Belisarius had half overthrown. Having defeated at Faenza, with only five thousand men, the numerous Byzantine army, led by the incapable commanders whom the jealousy of Justinian had substituted for Belisarius, the victorious king made a triumphal progress through Central Italy, and was on his way to Naples when he was seized with a desire to see this Benedict, whose fame was already as great among the Romans as among the Barbarians, and who was everywhere called a prophet. He directed his steps towards Monte Cassino, and caused his visit to be announced. Benedict answered that he would receive him. But Totila, desirous of proving the prophetic spirit which was attributed to the saint, dressed the captain of his guard in the royal robes and purple boots, which were the distinctive mark of royalty, gave him a numerous escort, commanded by the three counts who usually guarded his own person, and charged him, thus clothed and accompanied, to present himself to the abbot as the king.[35] The moment that Benedict perceived him, "My son," he cried, "put off the dress you wear; it is not yours." The officer immediately threw himself upon the ground, appalled at the idea of having attempted to deceive such a man. Neither he nor any of the retinue ventured so much as to approach the abbot, but returned at full speed to the

brachia loris fortibus astringens, ante equum suum cœpit impellere . . . quem, ligatis brachiis, rusticus antecedens duxit. . . . Eidem subsequenti et sævienti dixit: Ecce iste est de quo dixeram te, Benedictus pater. . . . Surge, surge, et res istius rustici redde quas accepisti. . . . Ad cujus brachia dum oculos deflexisset . . . cumque is qui ligatus veniret cœpisset subito astare solutus. . . . Tremefactus Galla ad terram corruit, et cervicem crudelitatis rigidæ ad ejus vestigia inclinans. . . . Qui fractus recedens." — S. Greg., *Dial.*, ii. 31. This miracle is represented on one of the capitals of the beautiful and curious church of St. Benoît-sur-Loire, in the diocese of Orleans.

[35] "Cui dum protinus mandatum de monasterio fuisset ut veniret. Spatharius. . . . Tres qui sibi præ cæteris adhærere consueverat. . . ." — S. Greg., lib. ii. c. 14. The spatharius was called Riggo, and the three counts, Vulteric, Ruderic, and Blindin.

king, to tell him how promptly they had been discovered. Then Totila himself ascended the monastic mountain; but when he had reached the height, and saw from a distance the abbot seated, waiting for him, the victor of the Romans and the master of Italy was afraid. He dared not advance, but threw himself on his face before the servant of Christ. Benedict said to him three times, "Rise." But as he persisted in his prostration, the monk rose from his seat and raised him up. During the course of their interview, Benedict reproved him for all that was blamable in his life, and predicted what should happen to him in the future. "You have done much evil; you do it still every day; it is time that your iniquities should cease. You shall enter Rome; you shall cross the sea; you shall reign nine years, and the tenth you shall die." The king, deeply moved, commended himself to his prayers, and withdrew. But he carried away in his heart this salutary and retributive incident, and from that time his barbarian nature was transformed.[36]

Totila was as victorious as Benedict had predicted he should be. He possessed himself first of Benevento and Naples, then of Rome, then of Sicily, which he invaded with a fleet of five hundred ships, and ended by conquering Corsica and Sardinia. But he exhibited everywhere a clemency and gentleness which, to the historian of the Goths, seem out of character at once with his origin and his position as a foreign conqueror.[37] He treated the Neapolitans as his children, and the captive soldiers as his own troops, gaining himself immortal honor by the contrast between his conduct and the horrible massacre of the whole population, which the Greeks had perpetrated, ten years before, when that town was taken by Belisarius. He punished with death one of his bravest officers, who had insulted the daughter of an obscure Italian, and gave all his goods to the woman whom he had injured, and that despite the representations of the principal nobles of his own

[36] "Quem cum a longe sedentem cerneret, non ausus accedere sese in terram dedit . . . : Surge, sed ipse ante eum de terra erigere se non auderet. . . . Jesu Christi famulus per semetipsum dignatus est accedere ad regem prostratum, quem de terra levavit. . . . Ex illo jam tempore, minus crudelis fuit." — S. Greg., lib. ii. c. 14. There is in the church of the Benedictines of San Miniato, near Florence, a curious fresco by one of the most ancient painters of the great Florentine school, Spinello Aretino, which represents this historical scene in an impressive and primitive manner.

[37] "Benignitas quæ illique nec barbaro, nec hosti satis convenit . . . unde factum est ut ejus nomen ut sapientiæ, ita et benignitatis celebre apud Romanos jam esset." — Procop., *De Bell. Goth.*, i. 3. Compare the Count Du Buat, *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Europe*, t. x. pp. 320, 329, 444.

nation, whom he convinced of the necessity for so severe a measure, that they might merit the protection of God upon their arms. When Rome surrendered, after a prolonged siege, Totila forbade the Goths to shed the blood of any Roman, and protected the women from insult. At the prayer of Belisarius he spared the city which he had begun to destroy, and even employed himself, at a later period, in rebuilding and re-peopling it. At length, after a ten years' reign, he fell, according to the prediction of Benedict, in a great battle which he fought with the Greco-Roman army, commanded by the eunuch Narses. The glory and power of the Goths fell with him and his successor Teïas, who died in a similar manner the following year, fighting with heroic courage against the soldiers of Justinian. But it did not consist with the designs of God to let Italy fall a second time under the enervating yoke of the Byzantine Cæsars. The rule of the Barbarians, although hard and bloody, was more for her welfare. Venice and Florence, Pisa and Genoa, and many other immortal centres of valor and life, could issue from that sway, whilst the incorporation of Italy with the Lower Empire would have condemned her to the incurable degradation of the Christian East.

552.

The Lombards.

The Ostrogoths had scarcely disappeared when the Lombards, imprudently called in by Narses himself, came at once to replace, to punish, and to make them regretted, by aggravating the fate of the Peninsula.

Placed as if midway between the two invasions of the Goths and Lombards, the dear and holy foundation of Benedict, respected by the one, was to yield for a time to the rage of the other. The holy patriarch had a presentiment that his successors would not meet a second Totila to listen to them and spare them. A noble whom he had converted, and who lived on familiar terms with him, found him one day weeping bitterly. He watched Benedict for a long time; and then, perceiving that his tears were not stayed, and that they proceeded not from the ordinary fervor of his prayers, but from profound melancholy, he asked the cause. The saint answered, "This monastery which I have built, and all that I have prepared for my brethren, has been delivered up to the pagans by a sentence of Almighty God. Scarcely have I been able to obtain mercy for their lives!" Less than forty years after, this prediction was accomplished by the destruction of Monte Cassino by the Lombards.

Benedict, however, was near the end of his career. His in-

terview with Totila took place in 542, in the year which preceded his death; and from the earliest days of the following year, God prepared him for his last struggle, by requiring from him the sacrifice of the most tender affection he had retained on earth. In the history of most saints who have exercised a reformatory and lasting influence upon monastic institutions, the name and influence of some holy woman is almost invariably found associated with their work and devotedness. These bold combatants in the war of the Spirit against the flesh seemed to have drawn strength and consolation from a chaste and fervent community of sacrifices, prayers, and virtues, with a mother or sister by blood or choice, whose sanctity shed upon one corner of their glorious life a ray of sweeter and more familiar light. To instance only the greatest: Macrine is seen at the side of St. Basil, and the names of Monica and Augustine are inseparable; as in later ages are those of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clara, St. Francis de Sales and St. Jeanne de Chantal. St. Scholastica.

St. Benedict had also a sister, born on the same day with himself, named Scholastica: they loved each other as twins often love, with fraternal regard, elevated into a passion. But both loved God above all. Still earlier than her brother, Scholastica had consecrated herself to God from her infancy; and in becoming a nun,[38] she made herself the patroness and model of the innumerable family of virgins who were to acknowledge, adopt, and follow the code of her brother. She rejoined him at Monte Cassino, and established herself in a monastery, in the depths of a valley near the holy mountain.[39] Benedict directed her from afar, as he did many other nuns in the neighborhood.[40] But they met only once a year; and then it was Scholastica who left her cloister and sought

[38] This act is not inconsistent with the decrees made by the Pope St. Leo and the Emperor Majorian, who interdicted women from taking the veil before they had reached the age of forty. In those decrees, the solemn benediction, which is equivalent to what we now call the solemn or perpetual vows, is alone referred to. — See THOMASSIN, *Vetus ac Nova Disciplina*, pars. i. lib. iii. c. 58. There were then, and had long been, several kinds of nuns. Some lived in isolated cells, as recluses; others remained, binding themselves to certain observances, in the bosom of their family; and others lived in a nunnery under a superior, and with a fixed rule. Mabillon has proved, against the Bollandistes, that Scholastica ought to be ranked among the latter. He has entitled her *Virginum Benedictinarum Ducem, Magistram, et Antesignanam.*

[39] It is supposed that this monastery was that of *Plumbariola*, rebuilt afterwards for the wife and daughter of a king of the Lombards, who became a monk of Monte Cassino.

[40] S. GREG., *Dial.*, ii. c. 12, 23, 33.

her brother. He, on his side, went to meet her: they met upon the side of the mountain, not far from the door of the monastery, in a spot which has been long venerated.

There, at their last meeting, occurred that struggle of fraternal love with the austerity of the rule, which is the only known episode in the life of Scholastica, and which has insured an imperishable remembrance to her name. They had passed the entire day in pious conversation, mingled with praises of God. Towards the evening they ate together. While they were still at table, and the night approached, Scholastica said to her brother, "I pray thee do not leave me to-night, but let us speak of the joys of heaven till the morning." "What sayest thou, my sister?" answered Benedict; "on no account can I remain out of the monastery." Upon the refusal of her brother, Scholastica bent her head between her clasped hands on the table, and prayed to God, shedding torrents of tears to such an extent that the table was flooded with them. The weather was very serene: there was not a cloud in the air. But scarcely had she raised her head, when thunder was heard, and a violent storm began; the rain, lightning, and thunder were such, that neither Benedict nor any of the brethren who accompanied him could take a step beyond the roof that sheltered them. Then he said to Scholastica, "May God pardon thee, my sister, but what hast thou done?" "Ah, yes," she answered him, "I prayed thee, and thou wouldst not listen to me; then I prayed God, and he heard me. Go now, if thou canst, and send me away, to return to thy monastery."[41] He resigned himself against his will to remain, and they passed the rest of the night in spiritual conversation. St. Gregory, who has preserved this tale to us, adds that it is not to be wondered at God granted the desire of the sister rather than that of the brother, because of the two it was the sister who loved most, and that those who love most have the greatest power with God.[42]

Death of Scholastica.

10th February, 543.

In the morning they parted to see each other no more in this life. Three days after, Benedict, being at the window of his cell, had a vision, in which he saw his sister entering heaven under the form of a dove. Overpowered with joy, his gratitude burst forth in

[41] "Insertis digitis manus super mensam posuit. . . . Caput in manibus declinans lacrymarum fluvium in mensam fuderat. . . . Parcat tibi omnipotens Deus, soror! quid est quod fecisti? . . . Ecce te rogavi et audire me noluisti. . . . Modo ergo, si potes, egredere, et, me dimissa, ad monasterium recede." — S. Greg., *Dial.*, ii. 33.

[42] "Justo valde judicio illa plus potuit quæ amplius amavit." — S. Greg.

songs and hymns to the glory of God. He immediately sent for the body of the saint, which was brought to Monte Cassino, and placed in the sepulchre which he had already prepared for himself, that death might not separate those whose souls had always been united in God.

The death of his sister was the signal of departure for himself. He survived her only forty days. He announced his death to several of his monks, then far from Monte Cassino. A violent fever having seized him, he caused himself, on the sixth day of his sickness, to be carried into the chapel consecrated to John the Baptist: he had before ordered the tomb in which his sister already slept to be opened. There, supported in the arms of his disciples, he received the holy viaticum; then placing himself at the side of the open grave, but at the foot of the altar, and with his arms extended towards heaven, he died standing, murmuring a last prayer.[43]

Death of Benedict. 21st March, 543.

Died standing! — such a victorious death became well that great soldier of God.

He was buried by the side of Scholastica, in a sepulchre made on the spot where stood the altar of Apollo which he had thrown down.[44] On that day two monks, one of whom was in the monastery and the other on a journey, had the same vision. They saw a multitude of stars form into a shining pathway, which extended towards the east, from Monte Cassino up to heaven, and heard a voice which said to them, that by this road Benedict, the well-beloved of God, had ascended to heaven.[45]

II. — HIS RULE.

Etenim benedictionem dabit legislator: ibunt de virtute in virtutem. — *Ps.* lxxxiii. 6, 7.

Di lui si fecer poi diversi rivi
Onde l' orto cattolico si riga
Sì che i suoi arbuscelli stan più vivi.
Paradiso, c. xii.

Such was the life of the great man whom God destined to be the legislator of the monks of the

Rule of St. Benedict.

[43] "Erectis in cœlum manibus stetit, et ultimum spiritum inter verba orationis efflavit." — S. Greg.

[44] Their tomb is still seen under the high altar of the present church of Monte Cassino. The inscription: "Benedictum et Scholasticam, uno in terris partu editos, una in Deum pietate cœlo redditos, unus hic excipit tumulus, mortalis depositi pro æternitate custos." I owe the reproduction of all those little-known inscriptions to the benevolent and scrupulous exactness of Mgr. La Croix, ecclesiastical representative of France at Rome.

[45] S. Greg., ii. 37.

West. It remains to us to characterize his legislation, that is to say, the rule which he has written, and which has been the undying code of the most august and fertile branch of the ecclesiastical army.

The first made for the West.

We must first observe that this rule is the first which has been written in the West and for the West. Up to that time, the monks of this half of the Roman world had lived under the authority of rules imported from the East, like that of St. Basil, or of traditions borrowed from the monks of Egypt or Syria, like those of which Cassianus had given so complete a collection. St. Benedict did not assume either to overthrow or replace the authority of these monuments, which, on the contrary, he recalled and recommended in his own rule.[46] But the sad experience of his beginning, of all that he had seen and suffered in his youth as anchorite, cenobite, and superior, had convinced him of the insufficiency of the laws by which the Religious of his own time and country were governed. He perceived that it was necessary, for the suppression of the laxness which appeared everywhere, to substitute a permanent and uniform rule of government, for the arbitrary and variable choice of models furnished by the lives of the Fathers of the Desert, and to add to the somewhat confused and vague precepts of Pacome and Basil a selection of precise and methodical rules derived as much from the lessons of the past, as from his own personal experience. His illustrious biographer instructs us to see in his rule an exact reproduction of his own life in the cloister.[47]

He undertook, then, to reform the abuses and infirmities of the order which he had embraced, by a series of moral, social, liturgical, and penal ordinances, the entire collection of which constitutes that *Rule* which, in immortalizing his name and work, has given to the monastic institute in the West its definitive and universal form.[48]

[46] C. 73. [47] S. Greg., ii. 36.

[48] We should remind our readers here that the Church recognized four principal rules, under which might be classed almost all the religious orders: 1st, That of St. Basil, which prevailed by degrees over all the others in the East, and which is retained by all the Oriental monks: 2d, That of St. Augustine, adopted by the regular canons, the order of Premontré, the order of the Preaching brothers or Dominicans, and several military orders: 3d, That of St. Benedict, which, adopted successively by all the monks of the West, still remained the common rule of the monastic order, properly so called, up to the thirteenth century; the orders of the Camaldules, of Vallombrosa, of the Carthusians, and of Citeaux, recognize this rule as the basis of their special constitutions, although the name of monk of St. Bene-

Let us listen to his own exposition, in his preamble, of the spirit and aim of his reform, given in a style peculiar to himself, the somewhat confused simplicity of which differs as much from the flowing language of St. Augustine and St. Gregory as from the correct elegance of Cicero or Cæsar: —

The fundamental idea of the Rule expounded in the preamble.

"Listen, oh son![49] to the precepts of the Master, and incline to him the ear of thy heart; do not fear to receive the counsel of a good father and to fulfil it fully, that thy laborious obedience may lead thee back to Him from whom disobedience and weakness have alienated thee. To thee, whoever thou art, who renouncest thine own will to fight under the true King, the Lord Jesus Christ, and takest in hand the valiant and glorious weapons of obedience, are my words at this moment addressed.

"And in the first place, in all the good thou undertakest, ask of him, in earnest prayer, that he would bring it to a good end; that having condescended to reckon us among his children, he may never be grieved by our evil actions. Obey him always, by the help of his grace, in such a way that the irritated Father may not one day disinherit his children, and that also the terrible Master, enraged by our perverse deeds, may not give up his guilty servants to unending punishment because they would not follow him into glory.

"Then, let us rise up in answer to that exhortation of Scripture which says to us, 'It is time for us to awake out of sleep.' And with eyes open to the light of God and attentive ears, let us listen to the daily cry of the Divine voice: 'Come, my son, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Work while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.'

dict or Benedictine monk may still be specially assigned to others: 4th and last, The rule of St. Francis, which signalized the advent of the Mendicant Orders at the thirteenth century. We shall further remark, that the denomination of *monks* is not generally attributed to the Religious who follow the rule of St. Augustin, nor to the mendicant orders.

The rule of St. Benedict has been published very often with and without commentaries. The most esteemed of the commentaries is that of Dom Martène, Paris, 1690, in 4to. That of Dom Calmet, Paris, 1734, 2 vols., may also be consulted with advantage.

The most recent and most correct edition of the Rule we know is that which has been given by Dom Charles Brandes, Benedictine of Einsiedeln, with a commentary and the history of the life of the patriarch, in three volumes. Einsiedeln and New York, 1857.

[49] It is necessary to note, for Christian iconography, these first words *Ausculta, O fili!* which painters of the middle ages are accustomed to reproduce on the book which they put in the hands of St. Benedict.

"Now, the Lord, who seeks his servant in the midst of the people, still says to him, 'What man is he that desireth life and loveth many days, that he may see good?' When if, at that word, thou answerest, 'It is I,' the Lord will say to thee, 'If thou wouldest have life, keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good: seek peace, and pursue it.' And that being done, 'Then shall my eyes be upon you, and my ears shall be open to your cry. And, even before thou callest me, I shall say to thee, Here am I!'

"What can be more sweet, O beloved brethren, than the voice of the Lord urging us thus? By this means the Lord, in his paternal love, shows us the way of life. Let us then gird our loins with faith and good works; and with our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel, let us follow upon his footsteps, that we may be worthy of seeing him who has called us to his kingdom. If we would find a place in the tabernacle of that kingdom, we must seek it by good works, without which none can enter there.

"For let us inquire at the Lord with the prophet . . . then listen to the answer He gives: . . . He who shall rest in the holy mountain of God is he who, being tempted by the devil, casts him and his counsel far from his heart, sets him at defiance, and, seizing the first off-shoots of sin, like new-born children, breaks them to pieces at the feet of Christ. It shall be those who, faithful in the fear of the Lord, shall not exalt themselves because of their services, but who, remembering that they can do nothing of themselves, and that all the good that is in them is wrought by God, glorify the Lord and his works. . . .

"The Lord waits continually to see us answer by our actions to his holy precepts. It is for the amendment of our sins that the days of our life are prolonged like a dream, since the Apostle says: 'Art thou ignorant that the patience of God leads thee to repentance?' And it is in his mercy that the Lord himself says: 'I desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn to me and live.'

"Having thus, my brethren, asked of the Lord who shall dwell in his tabernacle, we have heard the precepts prescribed to such a one. If we fulfil these conditions, we shall be heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Let us then prepare our hearts and bodies to fight under a holy obedience to these precepts; and if it is not always possible for nature to obey, let us ask the Lord that he would deign to give us the succor

of his grace. Would we avoid the pains of hell and attain eternal life while there is still time, while we are still in this mortal body, and while the light of this life is bestowed upon us for that purpose; let us run and strive so as to reap an eternal reward.

"We must, then, form a school of divine servitude, in which, we trust, nothing too heavy or rigorous will be established. But if, in conformity with right and justice, we should exercise a little severity for the amendment of vices or the preservation of charity, beware of fleeing under the impulse of terror from the way of salvation, which cannot but have a hard beginning. When a man has walked for some time in obedience and faith, his heart will expand, and he will run with the unspeakable sweetness of love in the way of God's commandments. May he grant that, never straying from the instruction of the Master, and persevering in his doctrine in the monastery until death, we may share by patience in the sufferings of Christ, and be worthy to share together his kingdom." [50]

The two governing principles:

In this programme the saint insists on two principles: action or labor, and obedience. These are indeed the two fundamental bases of his work; they serve as a clew to conduct us through the seventy-two articles of the rule which we shall now attempt to describe.

Labor.

Benedict would not have his monks limit themselves to spiritual labor, to the action of the soul upon itself: he made external labor, manual or literary, a strict obligation of his rule. Doubtless the primitive cenobites had preached and practised the necessity of labor, but none had yet ordained and regulated it with so much severity and attentive solicitude. In order to banish indolence, which he called the enemy of the soul,[51] he regulated minutely the employment of every hour of the day according to the seasons, and ordained that, after having celebrated the praises

[50] "Ad te ergo nunc meus sermo dirigitur . . . quisquis abrenuntians propriis voluntatibus Domino Christo vere regi militaturus, obedientiæ fortissima atque præclara arma assumis. . . . Exsurgamus ergo tandem aliquando. . . . Quærens Dominus . . . operarium suum. . . . Quid dulcius nobis hac voce Domini invitantis nos? . . . Qui malignum diabolum . . . deduxit ad nihilum, et parvulos cogitatus ejus tenuit et illisit ad Christum. . . . Ergo præparanda sunt corda et corpora nostra . . . militatura. . . . Constituenda est ergo a nobis Dominici scholæ servitii. . . . Processu vero conversationis et fidei, dilatato corde, inenarrabili dilectionis dulcedine, curritur via mandatorum Dei." — *Prologus Regulæ.*

[51] "Otiositas inimica est animæ." — *Reg.*, c. 48.

of God seven times a day, seven hours a day should be given to manual labor, and two hours to reading. He imposed severe corrections on the brother who lost in sleep and talking the hours intended for reading. "If," said he, "the poverty of the place compels them to gather their harvest themselves, let not that grieve them, for they will be truly monks if they live by the labor of their hands, like our fathers and the apostles. But let all be done with moderation because of the weak." [52] Those who are skilled in the practice of an art or trade, could only exercise it by the permission of the abbot, in all humility; and if any one prided himself on his talent, or the profit which resulted from it to the house,[53] he was to have his occupation changed until he had humbled himself. Those who were charged with selling the product of the work of these select laborers, could take nothing from the price to the detriment of the monastery, nor especially could they raise it avariciously; they were to sell at less cost than the secular workmen, to give the greater glory to God. Labor was thus regulated in the monastery as in an industrial penitentiary, and the sons of the Roman patricians or the Barbarian nobles found themselves subjected, in crossing its threshold, to a severe equality, which bound even the laborer more skilful than ordinary monks, and reduced him to the humble level of an ordinary workman.

And obedience.

Obedience is also to his eyes a work, *obedientiæ laborem*,[54] the most meritorious and essential of all. A monk entered into monastic life only to make the sacrifice of self. This sacrifice implied especially that of the will. By a supreme effort of that will, still free and master of itself, it freely abdicated its power for the salvation of the sick soul, "in order that this soul, raising itself above its desires and passions, might establish itself fully upon God." [55] In giving even the legitimate use of his own will, the monk, obeying a superior whom he had spontaneously chosen, and who was to him the representative of God himself, found an assured defence against covetousness and self-love. He entered like a victor into the liberty of the children of God. But this sacrifice, to be efficacious, had to be complete. Thus the rule pursued pride into its most secret hiding-place. Submission had to be prompt, perfect, and absolute. The monk must

[52] "Omnia autem mensurate fiant propter pusillanimes." — *Reg.* c. 48.

[53] "Artifices si sunt in monasterio. . . . Si aliquis ex eis extollitur pro scientia artis suæ." — *Ibid.*, c. 57.

[54] *Prologus Reg.*

[55] Bossuet.

obey always, without reserve, and without murmur, even in those things which seemed impossible and above his strength, trusting in the succor of God, if a humble and seasonable remonstrance, the only thing permitted to him, was not accepted by his superiors; to obey not only his superiors, but also the wishes and requests of his brethern.[56] Obedience became the more acceptable to God and easy to man, when it was practised calmly, promptly, and with good will.[57] It became then the first degree of humility. "Our life in this world," said the holy abbot, "is like the ladder which Jacob saw in his dream: in order to reach heaven, it must be planted by the Lord in a humbled heart: we can only mount it by distinct steps of humility and discipline."[58]

What can we do but lament over those who, in this generous abnegation of self, have seen only something borrowed from the worship of imperial majesty in degenerate Rome, and a fatal present made to Europe to weaken its own virtues?[59] No, this is neither a production of social decay, nor a sign of spiritual servitude. It is, on the contrary, the triumph of that moral and spiritual liberty of which imperial Rome had lost all conception, which Christianity alone could restore to the world, and the reign of which, specially extended and secured by the Children of St. Benedict, saved Europe from the anarchy, slavery, and decrepitude into which it had been thrown by the Roman empire.

Obedience tempered by the nature and origin of authority.

Doubtless this passive and absolute obedience would, in temporal affairs, and under chiefs appointed from without, and governing according to their interests or passions, become intolerable slavery. But besides the fact that among the Benedictines it was to be, always and with all, the result of a free determination, it was also sanctified and tempered by the

[56] Cap. 68 et 71. "Si cui fratri aliqua forte gravia aut impossibilia injunguntur . . . si omnino virium suarum mensuram viderit pondus excedere, impossibilitatis suæ causas . . . patienter et opportune suggerat, non superbiendo. . . . Quod si . . . prioris imperium perduraverit . . . sciat junior ita se expedire, et, ex caritate confidens de adjutorio Dei, obediat."

[57] "Non trepide, non tarde, non tepide." — C. 5.

[58] "Scala vero ipsa erecta, nostra est vita in sæculo: quæ humiliato corde a Domino erigitur ad cœlum. Latera enim hujus scalæ dicimus nostrum esse corpus et animam: in quibus lateribus diversos gradus humilitatis vel disciplinæ vocatio divina ascendendos inseruit." — C. 7.

[59] M. Guizot, *Cours d'Histoire Moderne*, 14th leç. As the antidote of this passage has been omitted by this great historian, generally better inspired, the *Panégyrique de St. Benoît*, by Bossuet, which is at the same time the eloquent and profound eulogy of the voluntary obedience of the Christian, should be read for this purpose.

nature and origin of the power. The abbot holds the place of Christ: he can ordain nothing that is not in conformity with the law of God. His charge is that of the father of a family, and of the good pastor: his life should he the mirror of his lessons. Charged with the important mission of governing souls, he owes to God the severest reckoning, and almost at every page of the rule is enjoined never to lose sight of that terrible responsibility. He has not only to rule them, but to heal them; not only to guide them, but to support them, and to make himself the servant of all whom he governs, obeying all, while each obeys him. He must accommodate himself to the most diverse humors and characters, but at the same time admit no respect of persons between the nobles and plebeians, the freemen and the slaves, the rich and the poor, who are under his authority.[60]

The chapter.

The exercise of this absolute authority is limited, besides, by the necessity of consulting all the monks assembled in a council or chapter upon all important business. The abbot has to state the subject, and to ask the advice of each, reserving to himself the right of making the final decision; but the youngest must be consulted like the others, because God often reveals to them the best course to follow. For lesser matters, the advice of the principal members of the monastery is sufficient, but the abbot can never act without advice.[61] His permanent council is composed of deans or elders,[62] chosen by the monks themselves, not by order of seniority, but for their merit, charged with assisting the abbot, by sharing with him the weight of government. He can also, by the advice of these brethren, name a prior or provost, to be his lieutenant.[63] Finally, the abbot himself is

[60] "Difficilem et arduam rem. . . . Regere animas et multorum servire moribus . . . se omnibus conformet et aptet. . . . Semper cogitet, quia animas suscepit regendas, de quibus et rationem redditurus est." — *Reg.*, c. 2. Compare c. 3. "Nec quasi libera utens potestate injuste disponat aliquid; sed cogitet semper quia de omnibus judiciis et operibus suis redditurus est Deo rationem." — C. 62. "Sciatque sibi oportere prodesse magis quam præesse." — C. 64. "Non præferatur ingenuus ex servitio convertenti, nisi alia rationabilis causa existat, . . . quia, sive servus, sive liber, omnes in Christo unum sumus, et sub uno Domino æqualem servitutis militiam bajulamus." — *Reg.*, c. 2.

[61] "Convocet abbas omnem congregationem . . . et audiens consilium fratrum, tractet apud se, et quod utilius judicaverit faciat. . . . Omnes ad consilium vocari diximus, quia sæpe juniori Dominus revelat quod melius est. . . . Non præsumant defendere procaciter quod eis visum fuerit." — *Ibid.*, c. 3.

[62] Decani, Compare *Reg.*, c. 3 and 21. Hæften., *Disquis.*, pp. 325, 332.

[63] *Reg.*, c. 65.

elected by all the monks of the monastery : they may choose the last new-comer amongst them to be their chief; and once elected, his authority ceases only with his life.[64] But in case of the election of an evidently unworthy person, the bishop of the diocese, or the neighboring abbots, or even the Christians of the environs, are entreated to prevent such a scandal.[65] Elections of the abbot.

This absolute authority of the abbot, fixed in a rule which he is neither permitted to modify or transgress, was then limited at once by the unchanging constitution of the community, by the necessity of consulting either an elect number or the whole body of his subordinates upon all business, and finally by the election from which it proceeded; and this election, made by a limited number of electors, all essentially competent, and personally interested in their work, made the chief in reality the servant of all those whom he commanded.

It must be acknowledged that the spirit of community or association was never more strongly organized. There is, in this combination of authority, at once absolute, permanent, and elective, with the necessity of taking the advice of the whole community and of acting solely in its interests, a new principle, to which nothing in the pagan world nor in the Lower Empire was analogous — a principle which demonstrated its energetic fertility by the experience of ages. The community drew an irresistible force from the union of these wills purified by abnegation, and concentrated towards one sole end under a single hand, which was ruled and controlled in its turn by the spirit of sacrifice. Between the profligacy of the Empire and the anarchy of conquest, the Benedictine cloister, that living image of Christianity, presented to the decaying world a system which retained at once the vigorous discipline of the Roman legions and that spirit of self-devotion and domestic unity remarked by Tacitus in the German guilds. Its analogy with the feudal system.

It has been said with truth, that there exists in this rule an evangelical foundation and a feudal form.[66] The institutions which it founded, like the words and images which it employed, bore a certain warlike stamp. It seemed to ex-

[64] "Etiam si ultimus fuerit in ordine congregationis." — *Reg.*, c. 64.

[65] At that time a majority was not requisite: the choice of the minority, if better, might carry the day: "Sive etiam pars, quamvis parva, congregationis, saniori consilio elegerit," c. 64. Subsequently, an absolute majority of voters was universally required to render valid the election of an abbot.

[66] Dom Pitra, *Hist. de St. Léger*, p. 58.

tend a hand to the feudal system, which originated in the camps of the victorious Barbarians. Of these two forces, the one organized and consolidated material conquest, the other created a hierarchy and army for the conquest of souls.

Organization of the community.

The monastery, like a citadel always besieged, was to have within its enclosure gardens, a mill, a bakery, and various workshops, in order that no necessity of material life should occasion the monks to leave its walls.[67] A certain number of Religious, whom the abbot judged worthy, might be raised to the priesthood, for the spiritual service of the house, without ceasing, on that account, to be subject to ordinary discipline.[68]

One monk, chosen from among the most worthy, under the title of cellarer, was specially charged with the administration of the goods of the monastery, the distribution of food, the care of the furniture, of the hospital, and, in a word, with all the details of material life.[69] Finally, the most generous and delicate hospitality was enjoined towards the poor and all the strangers who should visit the monastery; this was to be exercised by the direct care of the abbot,[70] but without disturbing the solitude of the monks, or the silence of their cloisters. Let every stranger be received, says the rule, as if he were Christ himself; for it is Christ himself who shall one day say to us, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in."[71]

The community thus founded and governed was supported besides by two conditions indispensable to its security and duration: the reciprocal tie of all its members by the solemn engagement of the *vow*, and the formation of collective property by the sacrifice of all that was individual. The renunciation of personal will naturally led to that of individual property. Everything in the monastery was to be in common; the fortune like the labor, and interests like duties. The rule, therefore, denounced the idea of personal property as a vice which it was most essential to root out of the community. It was necessary, then, in becoming a monk, that a man should solemnly and forever relinquish

Abdication of individual property.

[67] *Reg.*, c. 66.

[68] *Ibid.* c. 62. It has been already shown (p. 62) that, in the first centuries of its existence, the monastic order was not regarded as part of the clergy. Not only were the monks not all priests, but they were reckoned among laymen. It is very difficult to follow and recognize the different phases of the transformation which elevated the monks from the lay condition to that which procured them the title and standing of the *Regular Clergy*, in opposition to the *Secular Clergy*.

[69] *Ibid.*, c. 31.

[70] *Ibid.*, c. 53.

[71] *Ibid.*, c. 55.

all his possessions, either to his own family, or to the poor, or to the monastery itself; reserving nothing to himself, possessing nothing of his own, absolutely nothing, not even tablets or a pen for writing, but receiving everything from the abbot, and that only for present use.[72]

An institution in which celibacy was implicitly the fundamental basis, alone could bear a discipline so contrary to human nature. But even where a man, by giving up marriage, made himself free of all cares for his livelihood, he might still remain, in his own person, the object of the enfeebling tenderness of parents and friends. Benedict knew too well the habits of the nobility, to which he himself and his principal disciples belonged, not to redouble his precautions against the attempts made by parents to form a certain reserve or individual patrimony for the advantage of the child whom they gave to God by placing him in a monastery. By a special chapter of the rule, made out with the legal precision of a contemporary of Tribonius, every nobleman who destined his son for monastic life was required to swear that his child should receive nothing whatever of the paternal fortune, neither directly nor through a third party. The parents could only bestow on the monastery itself a donation which represented the fortune of their child, reserving the interest during their life if it so pleased them.[73]

Novitiate.

Even in the forms established by the new code to regulate the admission, try the vocation, and bind the consciences of these men who came to sacrifice their will and patrimony to God, everything shows the genius of organization possessed by Benedict. There were two classes of candidates for monastic life. First, the children confided in their youth by their parents to the monastery, or received by the charity of the monks; the rule prescribes their education with minute solicitude: then the young men and mature men who came out of the world to knock at the door of the cloister. Far from encouraging them, Benedict ordains that they should be left there for four or five days without opening to them, in order to try their perseverance.

[72] "Præcipue hoc vitium amputetur de monasterio: neque codicem, neque tabulas, neque graphium, sed nihil omnino." — *Reg.*, c. 33. Compare c. 58.

[73] "Promittant sub jurejurando quia nunquam per se, nunquam per suffectam personam, nec quolibet modo ei aliquando aliquid dent aut tribuant occasionem habendi. . . . Reservato sibi, si voluerint, usufructuario. Atque ita omnia obstruantur, ut nulla suspicio permaneat puero, per quam deceptus perire possit . . . quod experimento didicimus." — *Ibid.*, c. 59.

If they persevered, they were introduced into the apartments provided for guests, and from thence, at the end of some days, into the *novitiate*. Here the novice was intrusted to an old monk, skilful in the art of gaining souls, who was charged to study closely his vocation and character, and to tell him the difficulties, the humiliations, and discomforts which he would meet in the hard path of obedience. If after two months he promised to persevere, the entire rule was read to him, and the reading concluded in these words: "Behold the law under which thou wouldst fight: if thou canst observe it, enter; if thou canst not, depart in freedom!"[74] Three times during the year of novitiate this trial was renewed. When the year had expired, if the novice persevered he was warned that shortly he should no longer have the power of leaving the monastery, and of laying aside the rule which he had only accepted after such mature deliberation. It was intimated to him that he was about to lose the power of disposing of himself.[75] Introduced into the oratory in presence of all the community, he there, before God and his saints, promised *stability* or perpetual residence, and also reformation of his morals and obedience, under pain of eternal damnation. He made a declaration of this, written with his own hand, and placed it upon the altar, then threw himself at the feet of each of the brethren, begging them to pray for him. From that day he was considered a member of the community.

Vow of stability.

Almost all the ancient monks had adopted a sort of novitiate, and various vows, more or less formal. But no regular form had ever been adopted before this wise and imposing solemnity. Profession had even been often regarded as acknowledged by the sole fact of taking the monastic dress, and there were instances of this even after St. Benedict.[76]

[74] "Si perseveraverit pulsans, et illatas sibi injurias . . . patienter portare. . . . Senior ei talis deputatur, qui aptus sit ad lucrandas animas . . . omnino curiose intendat. . . . Prædicentur ei omnia dura et aspera. . . . Ecce lex sub qua militare vis: si potes observare, ingredere; si vero non potes, liber discede." — *Reg.*, c. 58. Chapters 60 and 61 indicate the precautions to be taken for the reception of priests or monks who present themselves to be received, having left their former monastery. The *Rule* forbids them to be received without the consent of the abbot of the monastery which they have left.

[75] "Ex illo die nec proprii corporis potestatem se habiturum sciat." — *Ibid.*

[76] This was called *professio tacita*. We shall hereafter see it exemplified in the case of Frideburg, the betrothed of King Sigebert, in the life of St. Gall; of King Wamba in Spain, and of the English nuns, quoted by St. Anselm, lib. iii. epist. 157.

But the *vow of stability* imposed by the new legislator, which no former rule had prescribed, was a happy and productive innovation, and became one of the principal guarantees of the duration and strength of cenobitical life.[77] Besides, no material or legal constraint at that time held the monk to his vow; even his secular dress was preserved with care, to be restored to him if he unfortunately desired to leave the monastery.

Details of the Rule.

Now that we perceive the general spirit and foundation of the rule of St. Benedict, we may be permitted to pass rapidly over the details. The seventy-three chapters of which it is composed are divided as follows: — nine touch upon the general duties of the abbot and the monks; thirteen upon worship and the divine services; twenty-nine upon discipline, faults, and penalties; ten upon the internal administration of the monastery; twelve upon various subjects, such as the reception of guests, the conduct of the brethren while travelling, &c.

Thirteen hundred years have passed since the hand of Benedict traced all those minute regulations, and nothing has been found more fit to strengthen the religious spirit and monastic life. The most admired and effectual reforms have scarcely had any other aim than to lead back the regular clergy to a code of which time has only confirmed the wisdom and increased the authority.

The liturgy.

Among all these details of the rule, the scrupulous care which the legislator has taken to bind the Religious to the careful celebration of divine worship, according to the liturgical usage of the Roman Church, is specially remarkable. They were to give themselves to prayer, chanted aloud by the community, first in the night, at vigils, which began about two in the morning and continued until dawn; then six times during the day — at prime, tierce, sexte, nones, vespers, and compline. The hundred and fifty psalms of David were divided among these seven services in such a manner that the whole psalter should be

[77] Some will be astonished, perhaps, not to see in the rule of St. Benedict, the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, which they consider as the essence of monastic life; but if the latter alone is mentioned, it is because the two others were implied in the very condition of monk by all the previous canons of the Church relative to the monastic institution. Now, St. Benedict only laid claim to *regulate* that institution, not to create it. They were bound to continence and poverty — that is to say, to possess nothing in their own right, by the mere fact of becoming monks, as they were restricted from marrying — by the mere fact of being ordained subdeacons, without taking on this subject any verbal engagement.

chanted every week; and this prayer in common was not to interrupt mental devotion, which, during the remaining time, was to be short and simple.[78]

Food. Then come these noble rules of sobriety, which, as Bossuet says, take everything superfluous from nature, and spare her all anxiety in respect to that which is necessary, and which are but a reproduction of the customs of the first Christians. To serve each other by turns in cooking and at the table; to eat, in silence, listening to the reading of some pious book, of two cooked dishes and one uncooked, with a pound of bread and a *hemine* of wine,[79] whether they made two meals in the day or only one; to abstain from all flesh of quadrupeds; and to increase the number and severity of the fasts appointed by the Church.[80] To have for clothing only a tunic, with a *cowl* for the choir, and a *scapulary* for work:[81] this was nothing else than the hooded frock of the ploughman and shepherds, borrowed from that of the slaves of pagan times, such as Columella has described.[82] To sleep in one general dormitory; to sleep but little, and always in their clothes and shoes;[83] and finally, to keep an almost continual silence dur-

Clothing.

[78] *Reg.*, c. 8, 19, 20.

[79] *Ibid.*, c. 39. The dessert was not included in these two dishes, or *pulmentaria cocta*. "Si fuerint poma aut nascentia leguminum, addatur et tertium." It is probable that the pound of bread prescribed by the rule was much more considerable than the modern pound, since it was ordered that they should reserve a third of it for supper. It has long been disputed what was the exact amount of the *hemine* of wine. The most general opinion is, that it was equivalent to a setier, or a little more than a pint. — D. CALMET, t. ii. p. 68-73.

[80] They were to fast every day from the middle of September till the beginning of Lent, and during Lent only to eat after vespers. — *Reg.*, c. 41.

[81] *Ibid.*, c. 55. The tunic is a robe with long sleeves, without a hood, which was used as a shirt; it was first white, and was subsequently changed into black, when the monks had shirts of wool or of coarse cloth. The cowl, *cuculla*, became a large mantle with a cowl, which they put on for the offices of the choir; large sleeves were subsequently added to it: this is black among all the Benedictines. It was also called frock, *floccus*, especially in the order of Cluny. The scapulary consists of two pieces of cloth joined round the neck, with a hood, and which hangs one part in front and the other behind: the length varies; it extends even below the tunic for the leaders of the choir, and to the knees only of the converts. The rule allowed to the monks for covering for the feet *caligæ et pedules*, by which were generally meant hose, or stockings and shoes. *Femoralia* were only allowed when they travelled on horseback. "Qui in via diriguntur de vestiario accipiant femoralia, quæ revertentes lota ibi restituant." Lastly, a narrow girdle of leather completed the costume of the monk.

[82] *De Re Rustica*, lib. i. c. 8, p. 445, ed. Gesner, 1772.

[83] *Reg.*, c. 22. The custom in ancient times, which was continued even in the middle ages, was, as we know, to sleep without clothing.

ing the whole day.[84] Such were the minute and salutary regulations which authorized Benedict to declare that the life of a monk ought to be a perpetual Lent.[85]

And there were other rules still better adapted to root out from the hearts of the Religious even the last allurements of pride, voluptuousness, and avarice. They could not receive either letter or present,[86] even from their nearest relatives, without the permission of the abbot. In accepting the rule, they pledged themselves beforehand to bear patiently public and humiliating penances for the smallest faults, and even corporeal punishment,[87] in case of murmuring or repetition of the offence, and this while still subject to temporary excommunication and final exclusion. But mercy appeared by the side of severity: the excluded brother who desired to return, promising amendment, was to be received anew, and three times in succession, before he was banished forever from the community.

Penalties.

However, in going back to the austerity of the ancient Fathers of the desert, Benedict does not hesitate to say, in the preamble of his rule, as has been seen, that he believed he had ordained nothing too hard or too difficult to be followed; and he ends by declaring that it was only a *little beginning*, a modest introduction to Christian perfection.[88]

Such are the most remarkable features of this famous code, which has ruled so many souls for so many ages, and which, although it has lost almost all its subjects, remains, notwithstanding, one of the most imposing monuments of Christian genius. Compared to the previous Oriental rules, it bears that seal of Roman wisdom, and that adaptation to Western customs, which has made it, according to the idea of Gregory the Great, a masterpiece of clearness and discretion,[89] in which judges who are above all suspicion have not hesitated to recognize a character of good sense and gentleness, humanity and moderation, superior to everything that could be found up to that time in either Roman or Barbarian laws, or in the habits of civil society.[90]

[84] *Reg.*, c. 42.

[85] *Ibid.*, c. 49.

[86] "Quælibet munuscula." — *Ibid.*, c. 54.

[87] *Ibid.*, c. 23 and 28. — "Si etiam excommunicatus non emendaverit, acrior ei accedat correctio, id est, ut verberum vindicta in eum procedat." See also for other penances, c. 43–46.

[88] "In qua institutione nihil asperum, nihilque grave nos constituturos speramus." — *Prologus Regulæ.* "Initium conversationis . . . hanc minimam inchoationis regulam." — *Reg.*, c. 73.

[89] "Discretione præcipuam, sermone luculentam." — *Dial.*, ii. 36.

[90] Guizot, *l. c.* Compare Dom Pitra, *l. c.*

No kind of praise has been wanting to this code of monastic life. St. Gregory, St. Thomas, St. Hildegard, and St. Antonius, believed it to be directly inspired by the Holy Spirit. Popes and Christian princes have vied with each other in celebrating it. The prince of Catholic eloquence has described it in these incomparable lines: —

Summary of the Rule by Bossuet.

"This *rule* is an epitome of Christianity, a learned and mysterious abridgment of all the doctrines of the gospel, all the institutions of the Holy Fathers, and all the counsels of perfection. Here prudence and simplicity, humility and courage, severity and gentleness, freedom and dependence, eminently appear. Here, correction has all its firmness; condescension all its charm; command all its vigor, and subjection all its repose; silence its gravity, and words their grace; strength its exercise, and weakness its support; and yet always, my Fathers, he calls it a *beginning*, to keep you always in holy fear." [91]

But there is something which speaks with a still greater eloquence than that of Bossuet in honor of the Benedictine rule; it is the list of saints which it has produced; it is the tale of conquests which it has won and consolidated throughout the West, where for eight centuries it reigned alone; the irresistible attraction which it had for bright and generous minds, for upright and devoted hearts, for souls enamoured of solitude and sacrifice; the beneficent influence which it exercised upon the life of the secular clergy, warming them, by its rays, to such a point that, purified and strengthened, they seemed for a time to identify themselves with the children of Benedict. It is distinguished above all by the contrast between the exuberant life of faith and spirituality in the countries where it reigned, and the utter debasement into which the Oriental Church, dishonored by the marriage of its priests even before it became a prey to schism and Islamism, had fallen.

Benedict's vision of the future fate of his work.

St. Gregory relates that the man of God whose life he writes, having one night anticipated the hour of matins, and gazing upon heaven from the window of his cell, saw all at once the darkness dispelled by a light more dazzling than that of day; and, amid that ocean of light, the entire world appeared to him crowded into a ray of the sun, "so paltry does the creature appear," adds the pontiff, "to the soul which contemplates the Creator!" [92]

[91] Bossuet, *Panégyrique de St. Benoît.*

[92] "Omnis etiam mundus, velut sub uno solis radio collectus, ante oculos

Tradition has interpreted that sight as a vision of the splendid future awaiting the order which Benedict was about to form, and which was to embrace the Christian universe, and fill it with light. A lively and faithful image, in fact, of the destiny of an institution, the future course of which, perhaps, its founder only foresaw under that mysterious form!

The admiration of Catholic doctors has signalized in Benedict the Moses of a new people, the Joshua of another promised land.[93] Nothing that he has said or written permits us to believe that he had any such idea of himself. Historians have vied in praising his genius and clear-sightedness; they have supposed that he intended to regenerate Europe, to stop the dissolution of society, to prepare the reconstitution of political order, to re-establish public education, and to preserve literature and the arts. I know not whether he entertained such grand plans, but I can see no trace of them either in his rule or his life. If they ever penetrated into his soul, it was only to be eclipsed and replaced by a still higher and greater idea, by thought of salvation. I firmly believe that he never dreamt of regenerating anything but his own soul and those of his brethren the monks. All the rest has been given him over and above "the one thing needful." What is most to be admired in his social and historical influence is, that he seems never to have dreamt of it. But is it not a sign of true greatness to achieve great things without any pompous commotion, without preconceived ideas, without premeditation, under the sole empire of a modest and pure design, which God exalts and multiplies a hundred-fold? Strange to say, nothing even in his rule itself indicates that it was written with the idea of governing other monasteries besides his own. He might have supposed that it would be adopted by communities in the neighborhood of those which he had collected round him; but nothing betrays any intention of establishing a common link of subordination between them, or of forming a bond between different religious houses, in order to originate an association of different and co-ordinate ele-

He did not foresee its great social and historical results.

ejus adductus est. . . . Quia animæ videnti Creatorem angusta est omnis creatura." — *Dial.*, ii. 34. The inscription in the tower of Monte Cassino, inhabited by St. Benedict, says, "Universum mundum divini solis radio detectum inspexit semil et despexit." St. Bonaventura explains this vision thus: "Mundus non fuit coangustatus in uno radio solis, sed ejus animus dilatatus, quia vidit omnia in illo cujus magnitudine omnis creatura angusta est." — *De Luminaribus*, serm. 20.

[93] S. Odo; S. Thomas, *Serm. de S. Bened.*

ments, like the great orders which have since arisen.[94] The object of his rule, on the contrary, seems to have been the concentration in a single home of the greatness and strength of the monastic spirit. Everything is adapted to that single monastic family, which, by a wonderful arrangement of Providence, has been constituted the stem of such productive and innumerable branches. Like Romulus, who, tracing the primitive walls of Rome, never dreamt of that King-People, that greatest of nations, to which he was giving birth, Benedict did not foresee the gigantic work which was destined to issue from the grotto of Subiaco and the hillside of Monte Cassino. The masters of spiritual life have always remarked, that the man who begins a work blessed of God does it unawares. God loves to build upon nothing.

And what is truly serviceable to man is to see the greatness of God issuing out of his own nothingness, and to recognize in that spectacle the productive power given to himself when he triumphs over fallen nature, so as to become again the lieutenant and instrument of God.

Greatness of its results.

However it might be, the results of Benedict's work were immense. In his lifetime, as after his death, the sons of the noblest races in Italy, and the best of the converted Barbarians, came in multitudes to Monte Cassino. They came out again, and descended from it to spread themselves over all the West; missionaries and husbandmen, who were soon to become the doctors and pontiffs, the artists and legislators, the historians and poets of the new world. They went forth to spread peace and faith, light and life, freedom and charity, knowledge and art, the Word of God and the genius of man, the Holy Scriptures and the great works of classical literature, amid the despairing provinces of the destroyed empire, and even into the barbarous regions from which the destruction came forth. Less than a century after the death of Benedict, all that barbarism had won from civilization was reconquered; and more still, his children took in hand to carry the Gospel beyond those limits which had confined the first disciples of Christ. After Italy, Gaul, and Spain had been retaken from the enemy, Great Britain, Germany, and Scandinavia were in turn invaded, conquered, and incorporated into Christendom.[95] The West was saved. A new empire was founded. A new world began.

[94] YEPES, *Coron. Gener.*; HÆFTEN, *Disquisit.*, lib. i. p. 12.

[95] "Et quidem Europa fere tota, Benedicti sæculo, monachis adlaborantibus, veram religionem suscepit." — MABILLON, *Præf. in* 1 *sæcul.*, c. 2.

Come now, O Barbarians! the Church no longer fears you. Reign where you will; civilization shall escape your hands. Or rather it is you who shall defend the Church, and confirm civilization. You have vanquished everything, conquered everything, overthrown everything; you shall now be in your turn vanquished, conquered, and transformed. Men are born who shall become your masters. They shall take your sons, and even the sons of your kings, to enroll them in their army. They shall take your daughters, your queens, your princesses, to fill their monasteries. They shall take your souls to inspire them; your imaginations to delight and purify them; your courage to temper it by sacrifice; your swords to consecrate them to the service of faith, weakness, and justice.

The world reconquered from the Barbarians by the monks.

The work will be neither short nor easy; but they will accomplish it. They will govern the new nations by showing them the ideal of sanctity, of moral force, and greatness. They will make them the instruments of goodness and truth. Aided by these victors of Rome, they will carry the sway and laws of a new Rome beyond the furthest limits ever fixed by the Senate, or dreamt of by the Cæsars. They will conquer and bless lands which neither the Roman eagles nor even the apostles have reached. They will become the nursing fathers of all modern nations. They will be seen beside the thrones of Charlemagne, of Alfred, and of Otto the Great, forming with them Christian kingdoms and a new world. Finally, they will ascend the apostolic See with St. Gregory the Great and St. Gregory VII., from which they will preside, during ages of conflict and virtue, over the destinies of Catholic Europe and of the Church, gloriously assisted by races faithful, manful, and free.

BOOK V.

ST. GREGORY THE GREAT.

SUMMARY.

Cassiodorus: his monastic retreat and his Christian academy at Viviers in Calabria. — The disciples of Benedict in Sicily; martyrdom of St. Placidus. — Benedictine Mission and Martyr Monks in Italy. — Ravages of the Lombards: they overthrow Farfa and Novalese. — First destruction of Monte Cassino.

St. Gregory the Great: his birth, his conversion; he becomes a monk at the monastery of St. Andrea; his alms and fasts. — He is nuncio at Constantinople, afterwards abbot of his monastery; his severity against individual property. — His desire to go to convert the Angles: the Romans detain him. — He is elected Pope, to his very great grief: his plaintive letters on leaving the cloister. — State of the world and of the Church at his accession. — Italy at once abandoned and ground down by the Byzantine emperors. — Relations of Gregory with the Lombards: he defends Rome against them. — Homilies on Ezekiel interrupted. — Mediation between Byzantium and the Lombards: Agilulf and Theodelinda. — Conversion of the Lombards. — Dialogues on the ancient monks. — His struggles against the Greeks. — Conflict with John the Faster, patriarch of Constantinople, with reference to the title of universal bishop; he desires for himself only the title of servant of the servants of God. — Conflict with the Emperor Maurice: law against the admission of soldiers to monasteries; celebrated letter to Maurice. — Maurice dethroned and slain by Phocas: congratulations of Gregory to the new Emperor; contrast to his courage and habitual rectitude. — He turns towards the new races, becomes their ally and instructor, and thus begins to emancipate the Church and the West from the Byzantine yoke. — His relations with the Franks and the Burgundians: Virgilius of Arles; Brunehaut; letter to the young king Childebert. — Celebrated charter of Autun, in which the temporal supremacy of the Papacy over royalty is proclaimed. — Relations with the bishops of Neustria. — His respect for the episcopate and for the freedom of episcopal elections. — His vast correspondence: universal vigilance. — Order re-established in St. Peter's patrimony. — He protects peasants, freemen, slaves, Jews. — His conduct towards the pagans and the Donatists. — Services rendered to the Liturgy and religious art; Gregorian Chants; musical education. — Ridiculous slander respecting his antipathy

to classical literature. — His writings: *The Sacramentary*, *The Pastoral*, *The Morals;* letters and homilies. — He is the fourth great doctor of the Church. — His extreme humility. — He remains always a Monk, and renders the most signal services to the monastic order: he confirms the rule of St. Benedict at the Council of Rome, and shields the liberty and property of the monks. — Exemptions. — Rigorous distinction between monastic life and the ecclesiastical state. — Monastic discipline is reformed and enforced. — History of Venantius, the married monk. — Nunneries. — Gregory watches over the freedom and sincerity of vocations. — Catella, the young slave. — The Abbey of Classe, at Ravenna, protected against the metropolitan; monastic foundations in Isauria and Jerusalem. — He always regrets the cloistral life, and habitually surrounds himself with monks; he makes them bishops and legates. — Charities and monastic hospitality. — His cruel sufferings; his last letters. — He dies. — Ingratitude of the Romans. — He is avenged by posterity. — His true greatness.

The Monks in Spain: origin of the order in Spain conquered by the Arian Visigoths. — St. Donatus, St. Emilian, St. Martin of Dumes. — St. Leander, monk and bishop of Seville. — School of Seville. — Martyrdom of Hermenegild; exile of Leander: he meets St. Gregory at Constantinople; their mutual tenderness. — Conversion of King Recarede and of the Visigoth nation under the auspices of Leander: their relations with Gregory. — The family of Leander: his sister Florentine. — His brother Isidore. — Action of the latter on the monastic order and Spain; his writings. — St. Braulius. — Visigothic formula of monastic foundations. — School of Toledo: Abbey of Agali. — Ildefonso of Toledo, monk and bishop, the most popular saint of that period. — Councils of Toledo: part played by the bishops; intervention of the laity; decrees and doctrines upon royalty. — Harshness against the Jews. — The *Fuero Juezgo*, issued by the Councils of Toledo. — King Wamba made monk in spite of himself. — Monastic extension in Lusitania. — St. Fructuosus and his hind. — The monks dwell on the shores of the ocean waiting for the conquest and invasion of the New World.

Quemadmodum radii solis contingunt quidem terram, sed ibi sunt unde mittuntur, sic animus magnus et sacer, et in hoc demissus ut propius divina nossemus, conversatur quidem nobiscum, sed hæret origini suæ; illinc pendet, illinc spectat ac nititur. — Seneca, *Epist.* 41.

I. — MONASTIC ITALY IN THE SIXTH CENTURY.

Even before the death of Benedict, the most illustrious of his contemporaries had sought in monastic life an interval of repose and freedom between his public career and his grave. Cassiodorus, who had been for thirty years the honor and light of the Gothic monarchy, the minister and the friend of

five kings, abandoned the court of Ravenna and all his offices and dignities,[1] towards the year 538, to found, at the extremity of Italy, a monastery called Viviers (*Vivaria*), which at one time seemed destined to rival Monte Cassino itself in importance.

Cassiodorus becomes a monk at Viviers.

Cassiodorus belonged to the high Roman nobility: his ancestors had seats at once in the senates of Rome and Constantinople. His fortune was immense. Successively a senator, a quæstor, and prefect of the pretorium, he was the last of the great men who held the office of consul, which Justinian abolished. He obtained, finally, that title of patrician, which Clovis and Charlemagne considered themselves honored in receiving. His credit survived all the revolutions of that terrible age. He was successively the minister of Odoacer, of Theodoric, of his daughter Amalasontha, and of his grandson Athalaric, who made him prefect of the pretorium. He retained that office under the kings Theodatus and Vitiges. He allied in his own person the virtues of the old Romans to those of the new Christians, as in his titles the dignities of the republic were conjoined to those of the empire. Full of respect for the popes and bishops, he was also full of solicitude for the people. An intelligent and courageous mediator between the Barbarian conquerors and the conquered population, he was able to give to the Ostrogoth royalty that protecting and civilizing character which it retained for some time.

470-562.

His political career.

To him must be attributed the finest portion of the great reign of Theodoric, who would have deserved to be the forerunner of Charlemagne, if he had contracted with the Church that alliance which alone could guarantee and fertilize the future. But, although an Arian, this great prince long protected the religious liberty of the Catholics; and during the greater part of his reign, the Church gained more by his benevolent indifference than by the oppressive and trifling intervention of the crowned theologians who reigned in Byzantium. Influenced by his pious and orthodox minister, he said nobly and wisely, that to him, as king, nothing beyond reverence with regard to ecclesiastical affairs pertained.[2] Cassiodorus, who filled the office of chancellor under him, showed in his official acts

Reign of Theodoric.

493-526.

[1] "Repulsis in Ravennati urbe sollicitudinibus dignitatum et curis sæcularibus." — Cassiod., *Præf. in Psalm.*

[2] "Nec aliquid ad se præter reverentiam de ecclesiasticis negotiis pertinere."

the great principles he held, and which most Christian doctors up to that time had appealed to. "We cannot," said he, in the name of Theodoric, "command religion, for no man can be forced to believe against his will;"[3] and to one of his successors, "Since God suffers several religions, we dare not impose one alone. We remember to have read, that a sacrifice to God must be made voluntarily, and not in obedience to a master. A man who attempts to act otherwise evidently opposes himself to the Divine commands."[4] Two centuries after the peace of the Church, he continued thus faithful to the great apologists of the time of the imperial persecutions: to Tertullian, who said, "Religion forbids us to constrain any one to be religious; she would have consent, and not constraint;"[5] and to Lactantius, according to whom, "To defend religion, one must know how to die, and not how to kill."[6]

Afterwards, when, unfaithful to his earliest policy, Theodoric arrogated to himself the right of interfering in the election of the Roman pontiffs — when he had dishonored the end of his career by cruelties of which Boëthius, Symmachus, and the holy pope, John I., were victims — when his daughter Amalasontha, whose reign was so happy for Italy, had perished by assassination — Cassiodorus, who, amongst all those crimes, had devoted all his energies and perseverance to preserve authority from its own excesses, to soften the manners of the Goths, and guarantee the rights of the Romans, grew weary of that superhuman task. No danger nor disgrace threatened him, for all the sovereigns who, after Theodoric, succeeded each other on the bloody throne of Ravenna, seem to have vied in seeking or conciliating him; but he had experienced enough of it. He was nearly seventy years old; fifty years had been passed in the most elevated employments; he had wielded a power almost sovereign, but always tempered by reason and faith. He resolved to end his life in monastic solitude. With him disappeared the glory and prosperity of the kingdom of the Goths in Italy.

[3] "Religionem imperare non possumus, quia nemo cogitur ut credat invitus." — *Letter of Theodoric to the Jews*, ap. Cassiod., lib. ii. ep. 27.

[4] "Cum Divinitas patiatur diversas religiones esse, nos unam non audemus imponere. Retenimus enim legisse nos voluntarie sacrificandum esse Domino, non cujusquam cogentis imperio. Quod qui aliter facere tentaverit, evidenter cœlestibus jussionibus obviavit." — *Letter of Theodatus to Justinian*, ap. Cassiod., lib. x. ep. 26.

[5] "Non est religionis cogere religionem, quæ sponte suscipi debet, non vi." — *Ad Scapulam*, in fin.

[6] "Defendenda religio est non occidendo, sed moriendo; non sævitia, sed patientia; non scelere, sed fide."

This was the first, after the downfall of the Roman empire, of these striking conversions, an innumerable series of which will pass before our eyes, which, even in the highest ranks of the new society, sought out the great ones of the world, to teach them how to expiate their grandeur, to rest from their power, and to put an interval between the agitations of the world and the judgment of God.

But in assuming the monastic frock, Cassiodorus seems to have recommenced to live. This religious profession offered as many attractions to his soul as employments to his activity. The monastery of Viviers, which he had built on the patrimonial estate where he was born, at the extremity of Calabria, on the shores of the Gulf of Squillace, took its name from numerous *vivaria*, or fish-ponds, which had been hollowed in the rock. It was a delightful dwelling, which he has described affectionately in terms worthy of that delicious region, where the azure sea bathes a shore clad with incomparable and perpetual verdure. The building was vast and magnificent; at a distance it appeared like an entire town. There were two monasteries for the numerous disciples who collected round the illustrious old man. Besides these, some who believed themselves called to a life more austere than that of the cenobites whose dwelling extended along the smiling shores of the sea, found, by ascending the mountain which overlooked them, isolated cells where they could taste in all its purity the delight of absolute solitude.[7]

Monastery and Christian academy of Viviers.

Cassiodorus himself, successively a monk and abbot, passed nearly thirty years in that retreat, occupied in governing his community, and uniting the study of literature and science with the pursuit of spiritual life. During his political career, he had made use of his power, with energy and solicitude, to maintain public education and intellectual life in that poor Italy, which was periodically overrun by floods of ignorant and rude conquerors. He has been declared, not without reason, the hero and restorer of knowledge in the sixth century.[8] As soon as he became a monk, he made his monastery a kind of Christian academy, and the principal centre of the literary

Monastic life and literary labors of Cassiodorus.

[7] "Habetis Montis Castelli secreta suavia, ubi, velut anachoretæ, præstante Domino, feliciter esse possitis, . . . si prius in corde vestro præparatus sit adscensus." — CASSIOD., *De Instit. Divin. Litter.*, c. 19.

[8] F. DE SAINTE-MARTHE, *Vie de Cassiodore*, 1684. Compare MABILLON, *Annal. Bened.*, lib. v. c. 24, 27.

activity of his time. He had there collected an immense library; he imposed upon his monks a complete and severe plan of study. His own example enforced his precepts; he instructed them with unwearied zeal in the Holy Scriptures, for the study of which he, in concert with Pope Agapetus, had attempted in vain to establish public professors in Rome. He added to this the study of the seven liberal arts, and profane literature in general. It was at Viviers that he composed most of his works, and especially his famous *Treatise upon the Teaching of Sacred Literature*,[9] a kind of elementary encyclopedia, which was the code of monastic education, and served long as a programme to the intellectual education of the new nations. At eighty-three he had the courage to commence a treatise upon orthography, in order to assist in the correction of ancient copies of the holy books.

Cassiodorus thus gave, amid his numerous community, one of the first and most illustrious models of that alliance of monastic and intellectual life which has distinguished the monastic order. The literary enthusiasm which inspired the noble old man served only to redouble his zeal for the strict observance of monastic regularity. "God grant to us grace," he wrote, "to be like the untiring oxen to cultivate the field of our Lord with the plough of observance and regular exercises."[10] It is scarcely known what rule he adopted. Some have believed that it was that of St. Benedict; but he has made no special mention of it in recommending his monks to follow the rules of the Fathers generally, along with the orders of their own superior, and to consult the institutes of Cassianus.[11] However, a strong analogy may at least be recognized between the usages practised at Viviers and the great example of St. Benedict, in the directions given by Cassiodorus on the subject of manual labor. He desires that those who are not capable of study, or of transcribing manuscript, should apply themselves to agriculture and gardening, especially for the relief of guests and of the infirm.[12] Like Benedict, he recommended them to bestow an affectionate solicitude upon travellers, and upon the poor and sick in the neighborhood. Like Benedict, he desired that the cultivators of monastic lands should share in the temporal and spiritual well being of monastic life. "Instruct your peasants

[9] *De Institutione Divinarum Litterarum.* "Quem monachi omnes accurate legere deberent." — MABILLON, l. c.

[10] *In Præf. Explic. Psalm.*

[11] *De Div. Litt.*, c. 32 and 29.

[12] *Ibid.*, c. 28.

in good morals; oppress them not with heavy or new burdens; call them often to your festivals, that they may not blush, if there is occasion for it, for belonging to you, and yet resembling you so little."[13] In short, he seems to follow the rule of Benedict even in its least details in that which concerns the nocturnal and almost perpetual psalms which characterized monastic worship, and which he explains as follows to his numerous disciples: "During the silence of night, the voices of men bursting forth in chants and in words sung by art and measure brings us back to him from whom the divine word came to us, for the salvation of the human race. . . . All who sing form but a single voice, and we mingle our music with the praises of God, chanted by angels, although we cannot hear them."[14]

Martyrdom of St. Placidus in Sicily.

Into the same region where the Roman minister of the Gothic kingdom completed his glorious career, but beyond these Straits of Faro, which doubtless exhibited then, as now, an enchanting scene of nature, other monks had likewise penetrated. The cherished disciple of St. Benedict, the son of the rich senator who had so generously endowed the new-born community of Subiaco, the young Placidus, had brought to Sicily the name and rule of his master. He had been sent there to recover the eighteen estates situated in that island, which his father had given to the Abbot of Monte Cassino, and the profits of which had been lost by unfaithful stewardship. He remained there, and established, towards the year 534, at Messina, the first Benedictine monastery which was formed out of Italy. Placidus collected there thirty monks, but was too soon interrupted in his work of religious colonization.[15] He perished with two of his brethren and his young sister Flavia, tortured and slain by a band of Moorish pirates, still pagans, and who, like so many other ruffians, made the monks the principal victims of their fury. The children of St. Benedict inaugurated thus the long series of their struggles and victories. The blood of Placidus watered the seeds of the order in Sicily, where its harvest, even up to our own days, has been so abundant.[16]

[13] *De Div. Litt.*, c. 32. [14] *Præfat. in Psalter.*

[15] We do not venture to relate here many very interesting features in the life of the first disciple of St. Benedict, because his Acts, attributed to one of his companions, the monk Gordian, have undergone very numerous interpolations, according to the unanimous opinion of Baronius, Mabillon, and the Bollandists.

[16] There were at that time, and subsequently, many monasteries in Sicily

We have said that the monks came to replace the martyrs, but that often also they imitated and joined their band. It was thus during the rise of the Benedictine order in Italy. Its extension was rapid during the last years of Benedict's life, and especially after his death. The tomb where the holy remains of the great legislator rested, under the guardianship of a line of fervent disciples constantly renewed, became the spring from which a new life flowed forth upon the peninsula.[17] Most of the ancient monasteries adopted the rule which flourished at Monte Cassino. It spread through Latium in the environs of Lake Fucino, where the holy abbot Equitius, shod with nailed shoes, made hay with his monks, and returned, after the hot and laborious day, with his scythe on his shoulder like any other laborer.[18] It was carried to the summit of Mount Soracte, where more than one brave solitary, well worthy of practising it, waited its coming, and where the gentle prior Nonnosus labored the rocky sides of the mountain celebrated by Virgil and Horace, to make gardens and olive-orchards for the use of his brethren.[19] It prevailed in several of the twenty-two religious houses which already existed at Rome.[20] It soon extended into the isles of the Mediterranean and Adriatic, which we have seen to be already occupied by monks, and especially into those which lay near the coast of Naples, whither, under the hideous tyranny of the first Cæsars, men accused of high treason had been banished, and where the love of heavenly things and spiritual freedom retained many voluntary exiles. Thus, throughout the whole peninsula, numerous companies of monks laboriously struggled, amidst the general confusion, against the depravity of Roman manners, against the violence of the Barbarians. Their lives afforded these lessons of austere virtue and miraculous power, the memory of which St. Gregory the Great has associated in his *Dialogues* with that of their holy patriarch. They died as they had lived, and braved martyrdom in public places as well as in the depth of woods.

Extension of the order in Italy.

Monks martyred by the Lombards.

inhabited by Greek monks, who followed the rule of St. Basil. — Yepes, *Chronica General.*, ii. 2.

[17] "Te monachorum turbæ diu noctuque concelebrant, corpus tuum in medio positum servantes, quod largos miraculorum fluvios effudit." — *Menées de l'Eglise Grecque*, ap. Dom Guéranger, *Carême*, p. 581.

[18] "Clavatis calceatus caligis, falcem ferrariam in collo deferens veniebat." — S. Greg., *Dial.*, lib. 4.

[19] V. S. Gregor., *Dial.*, lib. i. c. 7, on Nonnosus and Anastasius.

[20] Baronius, *Martyrol.*, 5 Dec. Amongst these the monasteries of St. Sabas and St. Erasmus held the first rank.

Upon the faith of that great doctor, the faithful have related from generation to generation, how the monk Herculanus, bishop of Perugia, when that city was besieged and destroyed by the Goths under Totila, was sacrified amid tortures, as the principal author of the resistance; how, in the Roman Campagna, the abbot Suranus was slain by the Lombards, who found him hidden in the hollow of an oak; and how, elsewhere, the same Lombards hung the monks, two by two, to the same tree.[21]

For the Lombards were already there. Scarcely had the Goths, who fell into their premature decay after Theodoric and Cassiodorus, disappeared, when a new race of Barbarians crossed the Alps and descended upon Italy. They were proud, intelligent, and warlike, Arian by name, but still, in fact, half-pagan, and a thousand times more cruel and dreaded than the Goths.[22] Under Alboin and his successors they ravaged the peninsula without pity, trampling under foot Greeks and Romans, Catholics and Arians, priests and laymen. Ruined cities, desecrated churches, murdered bishops and clergy, and exterminated nations, were everywhere seen in their track.[23] These ferocious conquerors reaped everything, and left only a desert behind them. The end of the world was supposed to have come.[24] They were especially furious against monks and monasteries. They burned and destroyed, among others, two considerable abbeys, the origin of which is unknown: Novalese, situated upon a plateau on the south side of the Piedmontese Alps; and Farfa, which imagined itself secure, hid among the fresh foilage of the Sabine woods, sung by Ovid —

"Et amœnæ Farfaris umbræ."

These names, destined to be so celebrated in religious history, yet the first appearance of which is marked by disaster, must be noted.

A great number of monks received martyrdom from the hands of these new persecutors; others, hunted from their first asylum, and wandering through the different parts of

[21] S. Greg., *Dial.*, iv. 21.

[22] Their first invasion took place in 568, at the solicitation of Narses.

[23] Anastasius, *Liber Pontif.*, c. 32.

[24] "Mox effera gens Longobardorum de vagina suæ habitationis educta in nostram cervicem grassata est, atque humanum genus . . . succisum aruit. . . . Depopulatæ urbes, . . . *destructa monasteria virorum ac feminarum*, . . . occupaverunt bestiæ loca quæ prius multitudo hominum tenebat." — S. Gregor. Magn., *Dial.*, iii. 38, *Epist.*, iii. 29.

Italy, carried with them the seeds of monastic life into countries which, without that storm, they might never have reached.

Finally, the Lombards ascended Monte Cassino, and pillaged and burned that already famous sanctuary, according to the prediction of Benedict, forty years before; but, as he had also predicted,[25] they could destroy nothing which had life, and did not take a single monk. Although the attack of the Lombards took place by night, and while the monks were asleep, they were all able to flee, bearing with them, as their entire fortune, the rule written by their founder, with the measure of wine and the pound of bread which he had prescribed.[26] They took refuge at Rome; Pope Pelagius II.[27] gave them a paternal reception, and permitted them to build, near the Lateran palace, a monastery in which the children of Benedict were to await for a century and a half the happy day which was to witness their return to their holy mountain.[28]

II. — GREGORY THE GREAT, MONK AND POPE.

But ere long a monk ascended for the first time the apostolical See. This monk, the most illustrious of all those who have been reckoned among the sovereign pontiffs, was to shine there with a splendor which none of his predecessors had equalled, and which flowed back, like a supreme sanction, upon the institute from which he came. Gregory, who alone among men has received, by universal consent, the double surname of Saint and Great, will be an everlasting honor to the Benedictine order as to the papacy. By his genius, but especially by the charm and ascendency of his virtue, he was destined to organize the temporal power of the popes, to develop and regulate their spiritual sovereignty, to found their paternal supremacy over the new-born crowns and races which were to become the great nations of the future, and to be called France, Spain, and England. It was he, indeed, who inaugurated the middle ages, modern society, and Christian civilization.[29]

[25] "Res, non animas." — *Epist.*, iv. 17.

[26] In 580, under Bonitus, fourth abbot after St. Benedict.

[27] According to Yepes and some other authors, this pope, like his predecessor, Benedict I., was a monk; but we find no proof of this assertion.

[28] They only returned to Monte Cassino about 730, under the abbot Petronatius.

[29] Compare Dom Pitra, *Histoire de St. Léger*, Introduction.

Issued, like St. Benedict, from one of the most illustrious races of ancient Rome, the son of a rich senator, and descendant of Pope Felix III., of the Anicia family,[30] Gregory was early called to fill a dignified place, which, in the midst of modern Rome, the vassal of Byzantium, and subject to the ceaseless insults of the Barbarians, retained some shadow of ancient Roman grandeur. He was prætor of Rome during the first invasions of the Lombards and the religious troubles stirred up by the fifth general council. In the exercise of this office he gained the hearts of the Romans, while habituating himself to the management of public business, and while acquiring a taste for luxury and display of earthly grandeur, in which he still believed he might serve God without reproach. But God required him elsewhere. Gregory hesitated long, inspired by the divine breath, but retained, led back and fascinated to the world, by the attractions and habits of secular life. At last he yielded to the influence of his intimate and close relations with the refugees of Monte Cassino, the successors and disciples of Benedict;[31] and then, obeying the grace which enlightened him, he abruptly broke every tie, devoted his wealth to the endowment of six new monasteries in Sicily, and established in his own palace in Rome, upon the Cœlian hill, a seventh, dedicated to St. Andrew, into which he introduced the Benedictine rule, and where he himself became a monk.[32] He sold all that remained of his patrimony to distribute it to the poor; and Rome, which had seen the young and wealthy patrician traverse its streets in robes of silk covered with jewels, now saw him, with admiration, clothed

He becomes a monk.

575.

[30] "Ex noblissima et antiquissima Aniciorum familia." — Joan. Diac. *in Vit. S. Greg. Magn.* He was born probably in 540, and died in 604.

[31] "Diu longeque conversionis gratiam distuli, et postquam cœlesti sum desiderio afflatus, sæculari habitu contegi melius putavi. Apparebatur enim mihi jam de æternitatis amore quid quærerem: sed inolita me consuetudo devinxerat, ne exteriorem cultum mutarem. Cumque adhuc me cogeret animus . . . cœperunt multa me ex ejusdem mundi cura succrescere, ut in eo jam non specie, sed, quod est gravius, mente retinerer." — *Præfat. ad Job.* The Benedictines who brought about his conversion were Constantine, disciple and successor of St. Benedict at Monte Cassino; Simplicius, third abbot of Monte Cassino; and Valentinian, abbot of Latran.

[32] "Mutato repente sæculi habitu." — Paul. Diac., *Vit. S. Greg.*, c. 3. Yepes and Mabillon have proved beyond question, against Baronius, that St. Gregory professed the rule of St. Benedict. — *Act. SS. O. S. B. Præf. in* i. *sæc.* § vii. See also his life by his Benedictine editors, lib. i. c. 3. This monastery of St. Andrew, which now bears the name of St. Gregory, has been since given to the Camaldules, and from it, thirteen centuries after, issued another Gregory, pope and monk, Gregory XVI.

like a beggar, serving, in his own person, the beggars lodged in the hospital which he had built at the gate of his paternal house, now changed into a monastery.[33]

His austerities.

Once a monk, he would be nothing less than a model of monks, and practised with the utmost rigor all the austerities sanctioned by the rule, applying himself specially at the same time to the study of the Holy Scriptures. He ate only pulse which his mother, who had become a nun since her widowhood, sent him to his convent, already soaked, in a silver porringer. This porringer was the only remnant of his ancient splendor, and did not remain long in his hands, for one day a shipwrecked sailor came several times to beg from him while he was writing in his cell, and finding no money in his purse, he gave him that relic of his former wealth. Long after, Gregory saw the shipwrecked man, who appeared to him under the form of his guardian angel, and instructed him that from that day God had destined him to govern his church, and to be the successor of Peter, whose charity he had imitated.[34]

Continually engaged in prayer, reading, writing, or dictation, he persisted in pushing the severity of his fasts to such an extent that his health succumbed, and his life itself was in danger. He fell so often into fainting fits, that more than once, as he himself relates, he should have sunk under them, had not his brethren supported him with more substantial food.[35] In consequence of having attempted to do more than others, he was soon obliged to relinquish even the most ordinary fasts, which everybody observed. He was in despair at not being able to fast even upon Easter eve, a day on which even the little children fast, says his biographer: and aided by the prayers of a holy abbot of Spoleto who had become a monk with him at St. Andrea, he obtained from God the grace of strength to observe that fast at least. But he remained weak and sickly all his life, and when he left his monastery, it was with health irreparably ruined.

Pope Benedict I. drew him first from the cloister in 577,

[33] "Qui ante serico contextu ac gemmis micantibus solitus erat per urbem procedere trabeatus, post vili contectus tegmine ministrabat pauper ipse pauperibus." — PAUL. DIAC., c. 2.

[34] "Crudis leguminibus pascebatur. . . . Matris argenteam quæ cum infusis leguminibus mitti solita erat. . . . Ego sum naufragus ille qui quondam veni ad te, quando scribebas in cella. . . . Ab illo destinavit te Dominus fieri præsulem S. suæ Ecclesiæ." — JOAN. DIACON., *Vit. S. Greg.*, i. 10, and ii. 23.

[35] "Nisi me frequenter fratres cibo reficerent, vitalis mihi spiritus funditus intercidi videretur." — *Dial.*, iii. 33.

to raise him to the dignity of one of the seven cardinal-deacons or *regionaries*, who presided over the seven principal divisions of Rome. He yielded, against his own will, to the authority of the pontiff. "When a ship," said he, "is not well moored in port, the storm seizes it, even on the most secure coast. Thus I am plunged again into the ocean of the world, under an ecclesiastical pretext. I learn to appreciate the peace of the monastery by losing it, though I have not been sufficiently careful of defending while I possessed it.[36] It is still worse when Pope Pelagius II. sent him, as *Apocrisiarius* or Nuncio, to the Emperor Tiberius. During this involuntary absence he was accompanied by several monks of the community, devoting himself with them to study and reading, and following, as much as possible, all the observances of the rule. "By their example," he wrote, "I attach myself to the coast of prayer, as with the cable of an anchor, while my soul is tossed upon the waves of public life."[37]

He is sent as Nuncio to Constantinople. 578.

He discharged the duties of his office, nevertheless, with reputation and success, re-established between the Holy See and the Byzantine court the friendly relations which had been interrupted by the Lombard invasion, and neglected no means to obtain from Tiberius and his successor, Maurice, the help demanded by Rome and Italy, against the terrible invasions, and the more and more oppressive domination, of the Lombards. He also learnt to know the shifts and subterfuges which the Byzantine spirit already employed against Roman unity and authority. He brought the patriarch Eutychus, who denied the actual resurrection of the body, to an edifying retractation.

After six years of his honorable and laborious exile, he returned to Rome, and regained the peaceful shelter of his monastery of St. Andrea, the monks of which elected him abbot soon after his return.[38] He enjoyed there

[36] "Navem incaute religatam . . . tempestas excutit ; repente me sub prætextu ecclesiastici ordinis in causarum sæcularium pelago referi, et quietem monasterii, quia habendo non fortiter tenui, quam stricte tenenda fuerit, perdendo cognovi." — *Præfat. ad Job.*

[37] "Ad orationis placidum littus, quasi anchoræ func. . . . Dum causarum sæcularium vertiginibus fluctuaret." — *Præf. Moralium.* Compare *Dial.*, iii. 36; Joan. Diac., i. 26. Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 1.

[38] The chronological order of these first events in the public life of St. Gregory has been finally established, in the work of the Mecklemburg pastor, Lau, *Gregor der Grosse, nach seinem Leben und seiner Lehre geschildert*, Leipzig, 1845. The history of the great Pontiff is there written with erudi-

Then elected abbot of his monastery.

584.

for some time longer the delights of the life which he had chosen. Tenderly cherished by his brethren, he took a paternal share in their trials and spiritual crosses, provided for their temporal and spiritual necessities, and specially rejoiced in the holy death of several among them. He has related the details of these in his *Dialogues*, and seems to breathe in them the perfume of heaven. But the affectionate kindness which always inspired him did not prevent him from maintaining with scrupulous severity the requirements of the rule. He threw into a ditch the body of a monk, who had been a skilful physician, and in whose possession three pieces of gold were found, in contempt of the article of the rule which interdicted all individual property. The three pieces of gold were thrown upon the body, in presence of all the monks, whilst they repeated aloud the words of the verse, "Pecunia tua tecum sit in perditionem." When this act of justice was accomplished, mercy took its sway once more in the heart of the abbot, who caused mass to be celebrated for thirty days successively to deliver this poor soul from purgatory.[39]

This tender solicitude for souls was on the point of separating him from his dear monastery and from Rome. Everybody knows how he saw exhibited in the market some poor pagan children, of extraordinary beauty and fairness, who were said to be of the country of the Angles, to which he answered, that they were made to become angels.[40] On which occasion, hastening to the Pope, he begged him to send missionaries into that great island of Britain, where the pagans sold such slaves; failing others, offered himself for this work; surprised the pontiff into consent, and prepared instantly for his departure. But when they understood his intention, the love with which the Romans had formerly regarded him was re-awakened. They surrounded the Pope as he went to St. Peter's; they cried to him, "You have offended St. Peter; you have ruined Rome in allowing Gregory to leave us." The astonished Pope yielded to the popular voice. He sent messengers after Gregory, who overtook him at three days' journey from Rome; they led him back forcibly

tion and as much impartiality as can be looked for from a Protestant minister. Compare *S. Gregorii Vita ex ejus Scriptis Adornata*, lib. i. c. 5, in the large edition of his works by the Benedictines.

[39] *Dial.*, vi. 55.

[40] "Bene Angli quasi angeli, quia angelicos vultus habent et tales in cœlis angelorum decet esse concives." — JOAN. DIAC., i. 21.

to his monastery. It was not as a missionary, but as a pope, that he was to win England to the Church.

He is elected pope. 590.

In 590, Pelagius II. died of the plague, which then depopulated Rome. Gregory was immediately elected pope by the unanimous voice of the senate, the people, and the clergy. It was in vain that he refused, and appealed to the Emperor Maurice not to confirm his election. The Romans intercepted his letter; the imperial confirmation arrived. Then he disguised himself, and, fleeing from Rome to seek some unknown retreat, wandered three days in the woods. He was followed, discovered, and a second time led back to Rome, but this time to reign there. He bowed his head, weeping, under the yoke imposed upon him by the divine will, and the unanimity of his fellow-citizens.[41]

First procession of the religious orders at Rome.

It was during the interval between his election and the imperial confirmation that, in the hope of turning back the scourge of the plague, he caused the famous procession of three days, in which, for the first time, all the abbots of the Roman monasteries appeared with their monks, and all the abbesses with their nuns, to be celebrated. Whilst these communities defiled before Gregory, he saw an angel appear upon the summit of the Hadrian Mole, putting back his sword into its sheath, the image of which, standing upon the colossal mausoleum, has given its name to the Castle of St. Angelo, and perpetuated to our own day the recollection of St. Gregory's vision.[42]

Gregory regrets the peace of his cloistral life.

The supreme pontificate, perhaps, never fell upon a soul more disturbed and afflicted than that of the monk who saw himself thus condemned to exchange the peace of the cloister for the cares of the government of the universal Church, and the special defence of the interests of Italy. Not only then, but during all his life, he did not cease to lament his fate. His sadness displayed itself first in his answers to the congratulations which reached

[41] "Infirmitatis meæ conscius secretiora loca petere decreveram. . . . Jugo conditoris subdidi cervicem." — *Epist.*, vii. 4, edit. Benedict. In referring to the epistles, we have almost always followed the order established in the edition of the Benedictines, which differs considerably from the ancient classification, quoted by Mabillon, Fleurs, &c. "Decretum generalitatis evadere nequivit. . . . Capitur, trahitur, consecratur." — JOAN. DIAC., *Vit. Greg.*, i. 41.

[42] Compare GREG. TURONENS., *Hist. Franc.*, x. i.; PAUL. DIAC., *De Gest. Longob.*, iii. 25; JOAN DIAC., *Vit. Greg.*, i. 41.

him from all quarters: "I have lost," he wrote to the sister of the emperor, "the profound joys of repose. I seem to have been elevated in external things, but in spiritual I have fallen. . . . I endeavor daily to withdraw from the world and from the flesh, to see heavenly joys in the spirit. . . . Neither desiring nor fearing anything in this world, I felt myself above everything. But the storm of temptation has cast me all at once among alarms and terrors; for, though I still fear nothing for myself, I fear much for those of whom I have the charge."[43] To the patrician Narses: "I am so overcome with melancholy, that I can scarcely speak; the darkness of grief assails the eyes of my soul; I see nothing that is not sad, and everything which is supposed to please me appears to me lamentable. For I cannot cease to see from what a height of tranquillity I have fallen, and to what a height of embarrassment I have ascended."[44] To Andrew, of the rank called Illustrious: "When you hear of my promotion to the episcopate, weep, if you love me; for there are so many temporal occupations here, that I find myself by this dignity almost separated from the love of God."[45] To the patrician John, who had contributed to his election: "I complain of your love, which has drawn me from the repose which you know I sought. God reward you with eternal gifts for your good intention, but I pray Him deliver me, as he shall please, from so many perils; for, as my sins deserve, I have become bishop, not only of the Romans, but of these Lombards who acknowledge only the right of the sword, and whose favor is torture. See how much your patronage has brought me."[46] Then, taking up once more these images which he loved to borrow from maritime life, he said to his intimate friend Leander, bishop of Toledo, whom he had met at Constantinople: "I am here so beaten by the waves of this world, that I despair of being able to guide to port this rotten old vessel with which God has charged me. . . . I must hold the helm amid a thousand difficulties. . . . I already hear the bell of shipwreck ringing. . . . I weep when I recall the peaceful shore which I have left, and sigh in perceiving afar that which I cannot attain."[47]

[43] "Alta quietis meæ gaudia perdidi." — *Epist.*, i. 5.

[44] *Epist.*, i. 6.

[45] "Si me diligitis, plangite." — *Epist.*, i. 30.

[46] "Quorum synthicæ spathæ sunt, et gratia pœna. Ecce ubi patrocinia vestra me perduxerunt." — *Epist.*, i. 31.

[47] "Vetustam ac putrescentem navim. . . . Flens reminiscor quod perdidi meæ placidum littus quietis." — *Epist.*, i. 43.

One day, long after, when, more than ever overwhelmed by the burden of secular affairs, he had withdrawn into a secret place, to give himself up to silence and sadness, he was joined there by the deacon Peter, his pupil, the friend of his youth and companion of his beloved studies. "Has some new trouble happened to you," said the young man, "that you are thus sadder than usual?" "My grief," answered the pontiff, "is that of all my days, always old by custom, and always new by its daily increase."[48] My poor soul recalls what it was of old in our monastery, when it soared over everything changeable and transitory; when it dreamt only of heaven; when by contemplation it escaped from the cloister of this body which enclosed it; when it loved death as the entrance of life. And now, because of my pastoral charge, it must bear the burdens of the men of the world, and soil itself in this dust. And when, after having exhausted itself without, it comes back to its internal retreat, it returns with diminished forces. I meditate on all I have suffered and lost. I see myself tossed by the ocean and broken by the tempest. When I think of my former life, I seem to look back towards the shore. And what is still more sad, when thus shaken by the storm, I can scarcely perceive the port which I have left."[49]

These exclamations of profound grief tell us all that we require to know of the influence of this cloistral life, which swayed to such an extent the holy soul of the greatest man of his age.

State of the world and the Church at the advent of Gregory.

It is true that the condition of the world and the Church, at the advent of Gregory, exhibited only causes of grief and alarm. An obstinate, although restrained schism, which dated from the fifth

[48] "Quadam die . . . secretum locum petii amicum mœroris . . . dilectissimus filius meus Petrus . . . mihi a primævo juventutis flore amicitiis familiariter obstrictus. . . . Num quidquam novi. . . . Mœror, Petre, quem quotidie patior, et semper mihi per usum vetus est, et semper per augmentum novus." — *Præfat. ad Dialog.*

[49] "Infelix animus meus occupationis suæ pulsatus vulnere meminit qualis aliquando in monasterio fuit, quomodo ei labentia cuncta subter erant. . . . Quod etiam retentus corpore ipsa jam carnis claustra contemplationem transibat, quod mortem quoque, quæ pene cunctis pœna est, videlicet ut ingressum vitæ et laboris præmium amabat. At nunc . . . et post tam pulchram quietis suæ speciem terreni actûs pulvere fœdatur. . . . Ecce etenim nunc magni maris fluctibus quatior, atque in navi multis tempestatis validæ procellis inlidor; et cum prioris vitæ recolo, quasi post tergum reductis oculis viso littore suspiro . . . vix jam portum valeo videre quem reliqui." — *Procem. ad Dialog.*

general council,[50] and which had lasted forty years, consumed the powers of the clergy. The papacy, always dependent on the Byzantine emperors, and unceasingly humiliated by them, did not even find, in the arm of these distrustful and incapable masters, the support which it needed against its enemies from within and without. Within the shadow of their throne flourished those patriarchs of Constantinople, whose ambition already aspired to the title of universal, and who were to end by rending the Church in twain. Africa was a prey to the Donatists; Spain was entirely Arian; England had fallen back into idolatry; in Gaul, despite the Catholic faith professed by the successors of Clovis, simony polluted the Church, and the struggles of Fredegond and Brunehaut distressed all Christians; in the East, the Avars and Persians threatened or ravaged the empire. But nothing was more lamentable than the state of Italy. As if the scourge of God, floods, plague, and famine, were not enough, men rent each other with contentions, and disorders of all kind invaded the Church, following in the steps of persecution and war. The Lombards, who from being pagans had become Arians, believed that by persecuting furiously the Roman Church they would secure their power against the Greeks; they regarded the papacy as the servant of the Byzantine court, and consequently as their own habitual enemy. The Greek emperors, on their side, accused the popes of treason, because they did not sacrifice everything to the necessities of imperial policy, or of usurpation, because they took upon themselves the task of providing for the public necessities when the inaction or powerlessness of the lieutenants of Cæsar became too evident. In reality, the successors of Constantine, with an instinctive perception of the future, perceived already, in the successors of St. Peter, the power which God had destined to replace their decrepid sovereignty, in Italy and over that city in which the imagination of Christendom still placed the centre of the empire and the cause of its existence. Thence came their tortuous, oppressive, and inconsistent policy. They would be obeyed as masters, by nations whom they knew not how to defend; and as, amid the ruins which despotism had everywhere accumulated, the papacy alone was seen standing, they willingly made the popes responsible for the consequences of their own weakness.

Italy at once abandoned and oppressed by the emperors.

[50] The second of Constantinople, in 553.

The poor monk who showed so much despair when he was thrown into that whirlpool by the unanimous voice of the Romans, could yet perceive with a bold and clear glance the dangers of the situation, and adopt a line of conduct which was a manifest realization of the infallible promises of Jesus Christ. He founded the temporal greatness of the Holy See, and the progress of its spiritual authority, upon the basis, long immovable, of the gratitude and admiration of nations.

Connection between Gregory and the Lombards.

First of all, and especially, he concerned himself with the Lombards. Although he has perhaps judged too severely in his writings this proud and intelligent race, whose courage and legislative powers have attracted the attention of posterity, and who were a hundred times more worthy than the degenerate Greco-Romans, whose authority he loyally endeavored to re-establish in Italy, Gregory used in his intercourse with them no means that were not legitimate and honorable. He had a right, after long and laborious negotiations with them, to bear this testimony to himself, "Had I been willing to lend myself to the destruction of the Lombards, that nation would have had to-day neither kings, dukes, nor counts, and would have been a prey to irremediable confusion; but because I fear God I would not assist in the ruin of any."[51] He doubtless alluded to the treacheries planned by the exarchs of Ravenna, who were the emperor's viceroys in Italy, by which they attempted to make up for their military inferiority before the Lombards. The Roman exarch was, by his animosity and cowardice, one of the principal afflictions of Gregory's life. After having broken the peace with the Lombards, and thus justified the renewed hostilities of their dukes Ariulf[52] and Arigis[53] in Central and Southern Italy, he abandoned Rome and Naples without defence, and notwithstanding interdicted the pope from treating with the invaders. It was then that Gregory displayed all the resolution of a valiant captain, with all the authority of a sovereign. He did not content himself with complaining bitterly to the Emperor Maurice of the desertion of Italy, and that, in order to guard Perugia, Rome had been left defenceless. "I was obliged," he wrote to him, "to see with my own eyes the Romans led into France with ropes round their necks like

[51] *Epist.*, iv. 47, 5. — He wrote this in 598.
[52] Duke of Spoleto.
[53] Duke of Benevento.

dogs, to be sold in the market." [54] But he himself provided what was most urgent, wrote to the military leaders to encourage them in resistance, pointed out to the soldiers assembled at Naples the leader whom they should follow, fed the people, paid the troops their wages and the Barbarians their contributions of war, all at the expense of the ecclesiastical treasury. "The emperor," he wrote to the empress, "has a treasurer for his troops at Ravenna, but as for me, I am the treasurer of the Lombards at Rome." [55]

At a later period, the king of the Lombards, Agilulf, disgusted by the renewed treachery of the imperial exarch, laid siege to Rome itself. Gregory, who was, above everything else, a bishop, and watched over the spiritual interests of the Romans with still more care than he exerted for their material defence, was then expounding the prophet Ezekiel in his sermons. He interrupted his discourses more than once to breathe out his grief, and to deplore the misfortunes of the eternal city. "Two things specially trouble me," he said, when he was asked at least to explain the last chapters of the prophet upon the re-establishment of the temple: "the obscurity of the text, and the news that King Agilulf has passed the Po on his way to besiege us. Judge, my brethren, how a poor soul, thus troubled and distracted, can penetrate into such mysteries." [56] And again, "What does the world contain which can please us? . . . We see nothing but sadness, we hear only groans. . . . Rome, once mistress of the world, how do we see her fallen! Where is the senate? where is the people? But why speak I of men? The very buildings are destroyed and the walls crumble down. . . . Once her princes and chiefs spread themselves over all the earth to possess it. The sons of worldly men hastened hither to advance themselves in the world. Now that she is deserted and ruined, no man comes here to seek his fortune: there is no power remaining to oppress the poor." After a time he announced that he should stop his preaching: "Let no one blame me if I put an end to this discourse. You all perceive how our tribulations increase. The sword and death are everywhere. Some return to us with their hands cut off, with the news that others are taken or killed. I must be silent, because my soul is weary of life." [57]

[54] "Quod oculis meis cernerem Romanos more canum in collis funibus ligatos. . . . Qui ad Franciam ducebantur venales." — *Epist.*, v. 40.

[55] *Epist.*, v. 21.

[56] *Homil.* 18.

[57] "Undique gladiis, . . . undique mortis periculum. . . . Alii detruncatis manibus. . . . Tædet animam meam vitæ meæ." — *Homil. ult. in Ezechiel.*

Agilulf, however, for some unknown reason, did not succeed in taking Rome. All the surrounding country was once more devastated, and the incurable desolation and unwholesome barrenness of the Roman Campagna dates from this period; but the city was spared. Gregory could verify the prophecy of St. Benedict, who had predicted that Rome, condemned to the most cruel trials, should sink back upon herself, but should not be destroyed.[58] He could still concontinue to watch over these crumbling walls, these overthrown palaces, these buildings worn out with extreme old age.[59] But, as a reward for his generous and useful efforts, he received only new denunciations from the exarch, and a reprimand from the emperor, who reproached him in insulting terms with his simplicity. "I understand," the pope replied to him, "what the language of your serene missives means: you find that I have acted like a fool, and you are right. If I had not acted like a fool I should not have borne all that I have borne for you among the swords of the Lombards."[60] He succeeded at last, after nine years' exertions, in overcoming the Byzantine repugnance to acknowledge any right whatever on the side of the Lombards, and concluded a peace between the two powers which made Italy, exhausted by thirty years of war and brigandage, thrill with joy. It was of short duration; but when hostilities recommenced, he entered into direct negotiation with King Agilulf, and obtained from that prince a special truce for Rome and its surrounding territory. He had besides found a powerful advocate with the Lombard king in the person of the illustrious Queen Theodelinda, who was the Clotilde of these last conquerors of Italy. This princess, a Bavarian and Catholic by birth, the widow of King Autharis by her first marriage, had so gained the heart of the Lombards, that they conferred upon her the right of designating his successor by marrying whomsoever she thought most worthy of reigning with her. In this way she had given her hand and crown to Duke Agilulf, in the same year as that in

His mediation between Byzantium and the Lombards. — 544.

Agilulf and Theodelinda.

[58] "Roma a gentilibus non exterminabitur, sed . . . in semetipsa marcescet." — *Dial.*, ii. 15.

[59] "Dissoluta mœnia, eversas domos, . . . ædificia longo senio lassata." — *Ibid.*

[60] "In serenissimis jussionibus dominorum pietas . . . urbanæ simplicitatis vocabulo me fatuum appellat. . . . Simplex denuncior: constat procul dubio quia fatuus appellor . . . quod ita esse ego quoque confiteor." — *Epist.*, v. 40.

which Gregory ascended the Holy See. These two noble hearts soon understood each other. The queen was always the faithful friend of the pope; she served as a medium of communication between him and her husband. It is not certain whether she succeeded in converting the latter,[61] but her gentle influence led the entire Lombard nation, little by little, from Arianism to the Catholic faith. Gregory, from the very beginning of his pontificate, had exhorted the Italian bishops to make special exertions for the conversion of these formidable enemies of orthodoxy.[62] It is believed that the queen was powerfully aided in this work by the *Dialogues* which Gregory had compiled from the narratives of the first disciples and successors of St. Benedict, and in which he related the life of that patriarch of the monastic order, and the marvels of fervor and penitence exhibited by the monks who were imbued with his spirit. This work was dedicated to the Lombard queen, as if to enable her to show to the devastators of Italy proofs of the sanctity and moral greatness with which the orthodox faith alone could endow the vanquished.

Conversion of the Lombards.

It was thus that Gregory snatched Rome from the yoke of conquest. He not only preserved her from the Lombards, but sheltered her from the violence of all the petty tyrants of the neighborhood, who rose amidst the universal confusion. But his soul was consumed, says one of his historians, by the fire of perpetual alarms concerning the fate of his children, and that consecrated soil which he regarded as their inheritance.[63] We can understand now how the patriotism of popes, such as Gregory, created their temporal power, and how, "sole guardians of Rome, they remained its masters."[64]

However, he required still more constancy and courage to contend with the Greeks, with that Eastern Empire which was represented by functionaries whose odious exactions had quite as great a share in the despair of the people as the ravages of the Barbarians, and whose malice was more dreadful, as he wrote, than the sword of the Lombards: "They can only kill our bodies, while the imperial judges devour our souls by

His political and religious struggles with the emperors.

[61] St. Columba, in a letter written in 607, speaks of him as still an Arian.

[62] *Epist.*, i. 29.

[63] "Urebant incessanter ejus animum filiorum hinc inde discrimina nuntiata." — Paul. Diac., c. 13.

[64] Ozanam, *Unpublished Fragment on S. Gregory.*

their rapine and fraud."[65] Elsewhere he denounces to the empress the officers who, in Sardinia, sold to the pagans for money the permission to sacrifice to their idols, and continued to collect that impost from those who had been baptized, and who, in Corsica, overwhelmed the inhabitants with such burdens that they were reduced to selling their children, and fleeing to seek refuge among the Lombards.[66] It was the same in Sicily, and the revenues provided by their extortions were to be employed in the defence of Italy. But, said Gregory to the empress, "it might be suggested to the emperor that it would be better to give up some expenses in Italy, in order to dry the tears of the oppressed in Sicily.[67] I say this briefly, and only that the supreme Judge may not impute my silence to me as a crime."

Which lasted during his whole life.

The entire life of Gregory was then a struggle with the Byzantine spirit, with the patriarch of Constantinople, who aimed at supplanting the Roman pontiff, as well as with the emperor, who would have dominated Italy without defending her, and ruled the Church as if she had been only a province of his empire. God had sent him, before his pontificate, to Constantinople, that he might the better understand that field of battle[68] in which he won for the Church more than one difficult victory.

Conflict with the Patriarch of Constantinople on the title of *Universal*.

Among so many conflicts — through which Gregory always maintained the rights and dignities of the Holy See, conciliating, at the same time, with extraordinary precautions, the arrogance of the Byzantine court — we shall dwell only on that one which arose between him and the patriarch of Constantinople, John, surnamed the Faster. Relying on the support of most of the Eastern bishops, faithful to the proud pretensions which for two centuries past had been entertained by the bishops of the imperial residence, and preluding thus the disastrous ambition of his successors, this monk, who had begun by a pretence of refusing the episcopate, took in his acts the title of œcumenical or universal patriarch. Gregory stood up with as much vigor as authority against this strange pretension. He did not draw back before the emperor, who

[65] "Ejus in nos malitia gladios Longobardorum vicit, ita ut benigniores videantur hostes, quia nos interimunt, quam Reipublicæ judices, qui nos . . . rapinis atque fallaciis in cogitatione consumunt." — *Epist.*, v. 42.

[66] *Ibid.*, v. 41.

[67] "Sed ego suggero ad hoc, ut, etsi minus expensæ in Italia tribuantur, a suo tamen imperio oppressorum lacrymas compescat." — *Ibid.*

[68] Dom Pitra., *Hist. de S. Léger*, Introduction.

openly sided with the bishop of his new capital, and, although deserted in the struggle by the two other patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria, who would have been equally wounded by the usurpation of him of Constantinople, Gregory persevered, during all his pontificate,[69] in his resistance to that wretched assumption, in which he perceived less an attempt upon the unity and authority of the universal Church, than an excess of pride on one side and adulation on the other, which disgusted his humble and generous soul.[70]

"What!" he wrote to the emperor, "St. Peter, who received the keys of heaven and earth, the power of binding and loosing, the charge and primacy of the whole Church, was never called universal apostle; and yet my pious brother John would name himself universal bishop. I must needs exclaim, O tempora! O mores! All Europe is in the power of the Barbarians. The cities are overthrown, the castles are in ruins, the provinces are depopulated, the soil has no longer hands to cultivate it; idolaters pursue the faithful even to death. And priests who should prostrate themselves in the courts of the temple in dust and ashes, seek after titles of vanity!" He took care to explain to the emperor that he did not defend his own cause, but that of the whole Church, which was scandalized by such an unheard-of pretension. He reminded him that Nestorius and Macedonius, both bishops of Constantinople, had both been heretics and heresiarchs. He added: "For me, I am the servant of all the priests as long as they live in a manner becoming the priesthood: but if any one raises his head against God and against the laws of our fathers, I am confident that he shall not make me bow mine, even with the sword."[71]

[69] The contest was renewed under Phocas. Neither the emperor nor the patriarch would yield. If Gregory did not obtain the victory, he at least paved the way for that of his successor Boniface III., under whom the emperor Phocas forbade the patriarch the use of the contested title; but during the following reign, under Heraclius, it was resumed by the patriarch Sergius. In return, the popes then resumed the right to confirm the patriarchs of Constantinople — a right from which the latter had been emancipated for a century, and which Photius did not succeed in overthrowing until three centuries later. — BARONIUS., *Annal.*, ad 606. LAU. p. 165.

[70] "Quousque pestem universalis nominis ab ipsis etiam subdolis adulatorum labiis penitus abstulisset." — JOAN. DIAC., *Vit.*, iii. c. 59.

[71] "Et vir sanctissimus consacerdos meus Joannes. . . . Exclamare compellor ac dicere: O tempora! O mores! Ecce cuncta in Europæ partibus. . . . Et tamen sacerdotes qui in pavimento et cinere flentes jacere debuerunt. . . . Numquid ego hac in re . . . propriam causam defendo. . . . Ego cunctorum sacerdotum servus sum. . . . Nam qui contra Dominum . . . suam cervicem erigit, . . . confido quia meam sibi nec cum gladiis flectet." — *Epist.*, v. 20.

Gregory was so much the more bold in combating the dangerous vanity of the Byzantine patriarch, that he himself had displayed on all occasions a sincere and practical humility. His vast correspondence and all the acts of his life furnish a thousand touching proofs of it. He had impressed the seal of this humility upon the papacy itself, by adopting, first of all the popes, in the preamble of his official documents, the fine title of *Servant of the servants of God*, which has become the distinctive title of his successors. He had expressly refused the same name of *universal bishop* or *pope*, which had been given him by the patriarch of Alexandria. His magnanimous humility displays itself fully in these noble words of his letter to this patriarch. "I desire to increase in virtue and not in words. I do not consider myself honored in that which dishonors my brethren. It is the honor of the universal Church which honors me. It is the strength and greatness of my brethren in the episcopate which does me honor. I feel myself truly honored only when I see that no man refuses to another the honor due to him. Away with those words which inflate vanity and wound charity! . . . The holy Council of Chalcedon and other Fathers have offered this title to my predecessors, but none of them has ever used it, that they might guard their own honor in the sight of God, by seeking here below the honor of all the priesthood." [72]

Noble humility of Gregory, *servant of the servants of God.*

This weighty difference, another of which we shall speak regarding the prohibition addressed to soldiers to their becoming monks, and especially that which arose between the pope and the emperor touching the irregular election of the metropolitan of Salona, contributed to render almost permanent the misunderstanding between them. That Eastern world which was so soon to become the prey of Islam, was obstinate in ignoring its best chance of salvation, in alienating the nations and Churches of the West, and in weakening by a minute and vexatious despotism the Christian life which had blossomed with so much promise in its bosom. Gregory had to exercise an incessant vigilance, to prevent the immense army of lay officials, from the emperor down to the meanest agent of the

Struggles with the Emperor Maurice.

[72] "Ego non verbis quæro prosperari, sed moribus; nec honorem meum esse deputo in quo fratres meos honorem suum perdere cognosco. *Meus namque honor est honor universalis Ecclesiæ.* Meus honor est fratrum meorum solidus vigor. Tum ergo vere honoratus sum, cum singulis quibusque honor debitus non negatur. . . . Recedant verba quæ vanitatem inflant, caritatem vulnerant." — *Epist.*, viii. c. 30.

treasury, from encroaching upon the rights and liberties of the Church, and especially from relaxing or attempting to break the ties of subordination which connected individual churches with the Holy See. And he had also to reconcile this permanent and universal resistance with the submission which he professed and practised, to the best of his power, towards the empire in temporal affairs. In claiming for the Church an almost absolute liberty and sovereignty in spiritual matters, he did not hesitate to declare himself the humble subject of Cæsar. From thence came that singular medley of immovable resolution and humble protestations which appears in his correspondence with the Cæsars. However, though he always spoke and often acted as a docile subject of the successors of Augustus and Constantine, they were not slow to understand that they had something else to deal with in this bishop, who was at once the direct successor of Peter, the patriarch of the entire West, and the greatest proprietor in Italy, and who had already occupied the place of mediator between the Barbarians and the Empire.

Protest against the edict relating to monks who had been soldiers.

We find this mixture of extreme humility and energetic resistance in another struggle, which the constant and natural concern of Gregory for the rights and interests of monastic life had led him into, in the beginning of his pontificate. The Emperor Maurice had published an edict which interdicted public functionaries and soldiers from entering either into the ranks of the clergy or into a monastery. Gregory approved the first clause of this law, which interdicted public functionaries from holding ecclesiastical offices: "for," said he, "these people prefer rather to change their occupation, than to leave the world."[73] But, always a monk in his heart, he protested against the measure relative to monastic life, in a letter celebrated for its eloquence and ability, and which must not be omitted here. He begins by declaring that he speaks not as pope, but as an individual, the obliged friend of the emperor, which explains the humble character of certain passages; but he soon rises to all the loftiness of spiritual power and the freedom of souls.

Celebrated letter to Maurice.

"The man who fails to be sincere in what he says or does to the serene emperors[74] is responsible towards God. For myself, the unworthy servant of your piety, I

[73] "Mutare sæculum, non relinquere." — *Epist.*, iii. 65.

[74] He speaks in the plural, because Maurice had associated his son Theodosius in the imperial power in 591.

speak neither as bishop nor as subject, but by the right which I find in my heart.[75] For, serene lord, you were my master before you became master of all. . . . I confess to *my masters* that this law has filled me with terror, for it closes the way of heaven to many. . . . There are many who can lead a Christian life in the world. But there are also many who cannot be saved, but by forsaking all things. . . .

"And who am I but dust and a worm of the earth, who venture to speak thus to my masters?[76] However, when I see this law interfere with God, the master of the world, I cannot keep silence. For this power over the human race has been bestowed from on high upon my masters, that they might help those who would do well to open up the way to heaven, and make the earthly kingdom serve the heavenly. Yet here it is forbidden to him who has once been enrolled in the terrestrial army to enter, unless when an invalid or in retirement, into the service of our Lord. . . . It is thus that Christ answers by me, the last of his servants and yours: 'I have made thee, from a secretary, count of the guards; from count, Cæsar; from Cæsar, emperor; if that was not enough, I have made thee also father of an emperor. I have put my priests under thy power, and thou withdrawest thy soldiers from my service!'[77] Sire, say to your servant what you can answer to Him who, at the day of judgment, shall speak to you thus.[78]

"Perhaps it is supposed that none of these men are truly converted; but I, your unworthy servant, have known many soldiers converted in my lifetime, who have, in the monasteries, given an example of every virtue, and even worked miracles. Yet this law interdicts every similar conversion. Inquire, I beseech you, what emperor it was who made a similar law, and see whether it becomes you to imitate him.[79] And consider besides that men would be prevented from leaving the world at a time when the end of the world approaches. For the time is not distant when, amidst the burning of heaven and earth, in the universal conflagra-

[75] "Neque ut episcopus, neque ut servus jure reipublicæ, sed jure privato loquor."

[76] "Ego autem hæc dominis meis loquens, quid sum, nisi pulvis et vermis?"

[77] "Ego te de notario comitem excubitorum. . . . Sacerdotes meos tuæ manui commisi."

[78] "Responde, rogo, piissime domine, servo tuo, quid venienti e hæc dicenti responsurus es?"

[79] He says in a subsequent letter that this was Julian the Apostate.

tion of the elements, surrounded by angels and archangels, thrones, dominions, and powers, the terrible Judge shall appear. When he would pardon all your sins, if he did not find this single law directed against himself, what, I pray you, will be your excuse? I conjure you by that terrible judge, not to make your tears, your fasts, your many prayers, useless before God, but to soften or abrogate this law, for the army of my masters shall increase so much the more against the army of the enemy, as the army of God shall increase in prayer.

"In submission, however, to your command, I have forwarded this same law into the different provinces, and because it is not in accordance with the will of God Almighty, I warn you of it by this supplication. I have thus fulfilled my duty on both sides — have rendered obedience to the emperor, and have not been silent concerning that which seemed to me in opposition to God." [80]

Modest and humble as this letter was, he did not venture to send it to the emperor by his resident representative, but confided it to one of Maurice's physicians, who was a private friend of his own, that it might be presented privately, and at a favorable moment. The immediate effect of this protest is not known, but it was listened to, for a subsequent letter of the pope to the metropolitans of Italy and Illyria enjoins them not to receive soldiers into monasteries till after a three years' novitiate, and adds, that the emperor consented to these conditions.[81]

These perpetual contests with the Byzantine court may explain, without excusing, the conduct of Gregory at the death of the Emperor Maurice. This prince, infected, like all his predecessors, with a mania for interfering in ecclesiastical affairs, and interfering with all the weight of absolute power, was very superior to most of them. Gregory himself has more than once done justice to his faith and piety, to his zeal for the Church and respect for her canons.[82] He acknowledged that in his reign no heretic dared open his mouth.[83] Almost the only thing with which the emperor could be reproached, was his avarice. After twenty years of an undistinguished reign, he unfortunately abandoned twelve thousand captives of his army to the sword of the Avars, who massacred the whole on his refusal to ransom them. From this circumstance arose a military revolt, which

[80] *Epist.*, iii. 65.
[81] *Ibid.*, viii. 5.
[82] *Ibid.*, v. 43, and xi. 25.
[83] *Ibid.*, x. 46.

placed Phocas upon the throne. This wretch not only murdered the Emperor Maurice, gouty, and incapable of defending himself, but also his six sons, whom he caused to be put to death under the eyes of their father, without even sparing the youngest, who was still at the breast, and whom his nurse would have saved by putting her own child in his place; but Maurice, who would not have his child preserved at such a cost, disclosed that pious deception to the murderers. He died like a Christian hero, repeating the words of the psalm, "Thou are just, O Lord, and thy judgment is right." He had before entreated God to expiate his sins by a violent death in this world, that he might be spared from suffering in the other. This massacre did not satisfy Phocas, who sacrificed the empress and her three daughters, the brother of Maurice, and a multitude of others in his train. The monster then sent his own image and that of his wife to Rome, where the senate and people received them with acclamation.

The Emperor Maurice assassinated, and replaced by Phocas.

23d November, 602.

Gregory unfortunately joined in these mean acclamations. He carried these images of his new masters, bathed in innocent blood, into the oratory of the Lateran palace.[84] Afterwards he addressed extraordinary congratulations to Phocas, not in the surprise of the first moment, but seven months after the crime.[85] "God," said he, "the sovereign arbiter of the life of man, sometimes raises up one to punish the crimes of many, as we have experienced in our long affliction; and sometimes to console the afflicted hearts of many, he raises another whose mercy fills them with joy, as we hope from your piety. Therefore we feel strengthened by the abundance of our joy, congratulating ourselves that your goodness has attained the imperial dignity. Let heaven and earth rejoice with us!"[86] He also wrote to the new empress: "No tongue can express, nor mind conceive, the gratitude which we owe to God, that your Serenity has attained the empire, and that we are delivered from the hard burden we have so long endured, and to which has succeeded a gentle yoke which we can bear. Let choirs of angels and voices of men unite with us to thank the Creator!"[87] It is true, that in

Strange adulations and lamentable weakness of Gregory towards Phocas.

[84] Joan. Diac., iv. 20.

[85] *Epist.*, xiii. 31. Data mense Junii, indictione vi.

[86] "De qua exultationis abundantia roborari nos citius credimus, qui benignitatem vestræ pietatis ad imperiale fastigium pervenisse gaudemus. Lætentur cœli et exultet terra," &c. — *Ibid.*

[87] "Quæ lingua loqui, quis animus cogitare sufficit quantas de serenitate

this same letter to Phocas, and in a subsequent one, he points out to him the duties of his charge, exhorts him to amend the errors of past reigns, and supplicates him so to rule, that under him all may enjoy their possessions and his freedom in peace. "For," says he, "there is this difference between the barbarous kings and the emperors of the republic, that the former rule over slaves, and the latter over free men."[88] This was precisely the reverse of the truth: it was, besides, a melancholy and guilty homage rendered to a man who was to become one of the most odious tyrants of his age, and who had gained the empire by a crime without parallel even in the annals of that infamous history.

This is the only stain upon the life of Gregory. We do not attempt either to conceal or excuse it. It can scarcely be explained by recalling all the vexations he had suffered from Maurice and his agents, annoyances of which he always complained energetically, though he did not fail to do justice to the undeniable piety of the old emperor,[89] who, like all his predecessors, imagined himself entitled to judge and direct the affairs of the Church, but was in no respect a persecutor. Perhaps, too, Gregory adopted this means to secure the help which he implored from Phocas against the new incursions of the Lombards,[90] or to mollify beforehand the already threatening intentions of the tyrant.[91] We have seen that he mingled advice and indirect lessons with his congratulations. It must also be remembered that these flatteries, which we find so repugnant from the pen of our holy and great pope, were in some sort the official language of those times; they resulted from the general debasement of public manners, and from the tone of the language invariably used then at each change of reign. His motives were undoubtedly pure. Notwithstanding, a stain remains upon his memory, and a shadow upon the history of the Church, which is so

vestri imperii omnipotenti Deo gratias debemus. . . . Reddatur ergo Creatori ab hymnodicis angelorum choris gloria in cœlo." — *Epist.*, xiii. 39.

[88] "Reformetur jam singulis sub jugo imperii pii libertas sua. Hoc namque inter reges gentium et imperatores reipublicæ distat, quod reges gentium domini servorum sunt, imperatores vero reipublicæ domini liberorum." — *Epist.*, xiii. 31.

[89] Compare *Epist.* v. 43, to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, and xi. 25, to Maximus of Salona, where he says expressly of Maurice, "Omnibus notum est piissimos dominos disciplinam servare, et in causis sacerdotalibus non miscere."

[90] Compare *Epist.* xiii. 38.

[91] "His laudibus novos principes demulcebat, . . . quia non eos ad tyrannidem venturos esse putabat." — Joan. Diac., iv. 23.

consoling and full of light in this age of storms and darkness. But among the greatest and holiest of mortals, virtue, like human wisdom, always falls short in some respect.

Gregory, who died sixteen months after the advent of Phocas, had no time either to expiate or repair that weakness. No doubt he would have done it, if occasion had been given him. His life demonstrated nothing more clearly than his boldness in presence of danger, and his immovable perseverance in the pursuit of right and truth, whenever he perceived them. All his career justifies the noble words which he wrote to his *apocrisarius* or nuncio at Constantinople: "You ought to know how I feel, I who have resolved to die rather than see the chair of St. Peter degenerate in my lifetime. You know my disposition; I bear long, but when I have once resolved to endure no longer, I face all dangers with joy." [92] Save in the deplorable instance which we have pointed out, he always showed himself faithful to the instructions which he gave to an Illyrian bishop who lamented over the iniquity of the imperial judges: "Your duty is to resist for the cause of the poor and oppressed. If you do not succeed, God will remember the intention; seek above all things to gain Him who reads hearts. As for human terrors and favors, they are but a smoke which vanishes before the lightest breath. Be assured that it is impossible to please God and the wicked at the same time; consider yourself most agreeable to God when you perceive yourself odious to perverse men. However, even in defending the poor, be grave and moderate." [93]

Contrast of his courage and habitual rectitude with this language.

But to perceive in all their purity the greatness of his soul and the influence of his genius upon the doctrines of the Church, it is necessary to turn from that Lower Empire which was condemned to irremediable decay, and where the seeds of schism budded in the bosom of abject servitude. Life and honor were elsewhere. Gregory was aware of it.

[92] "Mores meos bene cognitos habes, quia diu porto. Sed, si semel deliberavero non portare, contra pericula lætus vado." — *Epist.*, iv. 47. The point in question was the affair of Maximus of Salona: the letter is addressed to Sabinian, who was afterwards his successor.

[93] "Fraternitas tua opponere se pro pauperibus, pro oppressis debet. In omni quod agis inspectorem cordis appete habere placatum. . . . Nam humani terrores et gratia fumo sunt similes, qui leni aura raptus evanescit. Hoc certissime scito quod placere Deo sine pravis hominibus displicere nullus potest. . . . Ipsa tamen defensio pauperum moderata et gravis sit." — *Epist.*, x. 35.

Gregory turns towards the new races.

He did not content himself with the imposing position of defender of Rome, protector of Italy, and mediator between the Greeks and Lombards. He did more. In turning towards the Germanic nations, he showed the way by which the Roman Church, and with her the mind and future fate of the West, could be emancipated from the dishonoring yoke of Byzantium.

The Roman empire existed no longer in its first form. That climax of disgrace had come to an end. The civilized world was escaping from that absolute dominion exercised by monsters or adventurers, which has been admired in our own days by some base souls worthy of having lived under Caracalla or Arcadius. The human race had at last perceived its own shame. The yoke of a free nation, however cruel and iniquitous, may be borne without blushing; but to obey a nation itself enslaved by the most repellent despotism, is to ask too much of human baseness. The whole world was then in insurrection against Rome, and the insurrection had everywhere triumphed.

It was necessary that the victorious Barbarians, and those countries which had been revivified by the rude experience of conquest, should be kept from identifying in a common reprobation the odious phantom of old imperial Rome, and that young Church, the sovereign see of which God, by a secret miracle of his providence, had established in the very centre of the empire which had persecuted her so cruelly, which she had in vain attempted to regenerate after having converted it, but which she was shortly to eclipse and replace in the world. It was necessary to keep Constantinople from imagining itself the heir of Rome, and planting its degrading and egotistical dominion beside the protecting, and up to this time irreproachable, authority of the popes. The Franks, the Visigoths, the Lombards, and the Anglo-Saxons, entered on the scene; they inaugurated the destiny of races which, after the course of thirteen centuries, are still at the head of humanity; they would willingly bow their youthful and unsubdued force before the pure and new-born majesty of the Church, but not before the decrepid servitude of the Byzantine empire.

Gregory was the man predestined to the salutary and decisive work of transition. The spiritual and temporal independence of the West manifested itself in him. He was the first pope who paid special attention to the Western races, and associated himself, by directing it, with the prog-

ress of the German conquerors. He was their friend, their educator, and their master. To assimilate them to the Church, to adapt her to their instincts and reason, without compromising the traditional element and sovereign authority, the immovable centre of which was to remain standing in the midst of desolated Rome, nothing less would suffice than the tender and patient genius of Gregory and his successors.

He makes use of the Germanic nations for the emancipation of the Church and the West from the Byzantine yoke.

Long crushed between the Lombards and Byzantines, between the unsoftened ferocity of the Barbarians and the vexatious decrepitude of despotism, Gregory, with that instinctive perception of future events which God sometimes grants to pure souls, sought elsewhere a support for the Roman Church. His eyes were directed to the new races, who were scarcely less ferocious than the Lombards, but who did not, like them, weigh upon Italy and Rome, and who already exhibited elements of strength and continuance.

The West separated itself more and more from the East.[94] The patriarch of Constantinople, despite the proud titles with which he concealed his servitude, gradually fell into the first rank of the imperial household. The patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem, were about to be swept away by Islamism. Rome alone remained standing. Incessantly insulted, but not yet enslaved. Africa and Illyria, which were still attached to the patriarchate of the West, of which Rome was the see, were soon to fall, one under the sword of the Arabs, the other to identify itself with the domains of the Cæsar of Constantinople. But the great churches of the new northern kingdom could make up, and more than make up, for that loss.

The rupture of all political ties between the Roman empire and Gaul, Spain, and Britain, had naturally loosened the links which attached the Churches of these countries to Rome. To renew these links, and to preserve the Church from sinking under the feudal institutions which were to prevail in the new order of social affairs, the best thing that could be done was to form alliances with the Germanic races which had replaced Roman dominion. Gregory took that glorious and salutary initiative. We shall see further on what he did for Spain and Great Britain. Let us first exhibit his choice of Gaul, the Church and kingdom of the Franks, to become the nucleus of the great

His relations with the Franks.

[94] Lau., *op. cit.*, pp. 179 and 189.

Germanic Christendom. He thus attached to himself the only nation among the Barbarians which, while Arianism prevailed everywhere, remained orthodox. He founded the alliance which, two centuries after, finally freed the Holy See from every foreign yoke, from Byzantine dominion, as well as from the violence of the Lombards.

It does not appear that he called the Franks to the help of Italy against the Lombards, like his predecessor, Pelagius II.; they had come already, and three Frank invasions [95] had produced only an increase of calamity to the inhabitants of the northern part of the peninsula. He took another way, and entered, in the first place, into the closest relations with the Church of Gaul, on account of lands which the Roman Church possessed in Provence, and which had been long deserted, like all the other vast territories which already constituted the patrimony of St. Peter. A holy monk of the isle of Lerins, Virgilius, was then bishop of Arles, and metropolitan of Provence. Gregory gave him the pallium, without prejudice to the rights of the metropolitan, and made him his vicar in the domains of King Childebert, enjoining him specially to devote himself to the work of rooting out the radical vices of the Gallo-Frank Church, which was simony, and the election of laymen to bishoprics.[96] He took occasion from this to address himself directly to the young king, Childebert II., who reigned in Burgundy and Austrasia, and to his mother Brunehaut, as much to recommend Virgilius to their support in the execution of the apostolical decrees, as to ask their protection for the priest Candidus, whom he had charged with the administration of the pontifical possessions in Gaul. It is in one of these letters to Brunehaut that we find, on the subject of the education which she had given to her descendants, and other virtues supposed to belong to her, those emphatic compliments with which he has been so often reproached, and which agree so little with all that we know of the life of that too notorious princess. But it cannot be denied, that along with these praises, borrowed from the adulatory style of the Byzantine court, the forms of which he had too much accustomed himself to imitate, Gregory addressed to the young king Childebert the noblest language which had ever been addressed by a pontiff to a king. He began, in the words which follow, to make audible that great

The monk Virgilius at Arles.

June, 595.

Letters of Gregory to Childebert and Brunehaut.

[95] In 580, 589, and 590.

[96] *Epist.*, iv. 50.

papal voice which, for a thousand years, was to be the supreme organ of justice and humanity to princes and nations: — "As much as the royal dignity is above common men, your throne elevates you above the other thrones of nations. It is a small thing to be a king when others are so, but it is a great thing to be a Catholic, when others do not share the same honor. As a great lamp shines with all the brilliancy of its light in the deepest darkness of night, so the splendor of your faith shines amid the voluntary obscurity of other nations. . . . In order, then, to surpass other men in works as well as in faith, let not your Excellency cease to show yourself merciful to your subjects. If there are things which offend you, punish none without discussion. You shall please the King of kings best when, restraining your authority, you believe yourself to have less privilege than power." [97]

Continued intercourse between Gregory and Brunehaut.

After the premature death of Childebert II. in 596, and during the minority of his heirs, Brunehaut, who was regent of his two kingdoms, the east and south-east of Gaul, continued an increasingly close and frequent intercourse with Gregory. She asked the pallium for the Bishop of Autun, and he accorded that envied distinction to the Burgundian prelate, only while insisting anew upon the necessity of extirpating simony, destroying the remnants of idolatry, which still mingled with the Christianity of the Franks and Burgondes, reforming the scandalous life of some priests who lived with women, and, lastly, putting an end to that invasion of unprepared laymen into the priesthood, and even into the episcopate, which he energetically called the *heresy of neophytes*.[98]

He sent to her, in the quality of legate, and in order to hold a council for the cure of these irregularities, Cyriac, the abbot of his own monastery of St. Andrea at Rome. This council was never assembled; but Brunehaut, and her grandson Thierry, king of Burgundy, sent an embassy to Gregory in 602, to negotiate, by his mediation, a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Byzantine emperor, against the Avars, who threatened the empire and the Frank kingdoms equally. The political and social part played by the Papacy developed itself thus gradually and naturally under

[97] "Si qua sunt quæ ejus animum offendere valeant, ea indiscussa non sinat. Tunc enim vere Regi regum . . . amplius placebit, si, potestatem suam restringens, minus sibi crediderit licere quam potest." — *Epist.*, vi. 6. Do not these words anticipate the fine maxim of our old jurisconsult Bodin, "Universal power does not give universal right"?

[98] *Epist.*, vii. 5. Compare x. 33, xi. 63, 69.

the pontificate of the first monk who had occupied the chair of St. Peter. The murder of Maurice, it is true, prevented the success of this negotiation; but the Burgundian ambassador was charged, besides, to obtain from the pope the confirmation of two monasteries and a hospital, which Brunehaut had founded at Autun.[99]

Charter of Autun, which proclaims the temporal supremacy of the Papacy over the Crown.

It was then, and at the express request of the Frankish crown, that Gregory issued that famous charter, in which, for the first time, the direct subordination of temporal power to spiritual is clearly set forth and recognized. The inviolability of persons and property, and the electoral freedom of the three new monastic communities of Autun, were placed under the safeguard of papal authority, and of a penalty which is thus declared: "If any *king*, bishop, judge, or other secular person, knowing this constitution, shall venture to infringe it, let him be deprived of the *dignity of his power and honor*, and let him know that he has rendered himself guilty before the tribunal of God. And if he does not restore that which he has wickedly taken away, or lament with fit penitence the unlawful acts he has done, let him be debarred from the holy body and blood of our God and Saviour, and remain subject in the eternal judgment to a severe retribution."[100]

Thus the hand of the Church began to write, but with the consent of the elective and limited royalty of conquering races, that new law of the West which, five centuries later than the monk Gregory I., was to be appealed to and applied in its full extent by the monk Gregory VII. and his successors. Nothing can better depict the difference of sentiment and attitude displayed by the Papacy towards the kings of the Germanic nations and the Byzantine emperors, than the contrast between this document and the almost passive obe-

[99] The one for women, dedicated to our Lady and St. John; the other for men, dedicated to St. Martin: the hospital in honor of St. Andochius was also a monastery for monks.

[100] "Si quis vero regum, sacerdotum, judicum, personarumque secularium hanc constitutionis nostræ paginam agnoscens, contra eam venire tentaverit, potestatis honorisque sui dignitate careat reumque se divino judicio de perpetrata iniquitate cognoscat. Et nisi vel ea quæ ab illo male ablata sunt restituerit, vel digna pœnitentia illicite acta defleverit, a sacratissimo corpore ac sanguine Dei et Domini nostri Redemptoris J. C. alienus fiat atque in æterno examine districtæ ultioni subjaceat."— *Epist.*, xiii. 8, 9, 10. Oudin and Launoy have disputed the authenticity of this clause, but it has been put beyond a doubt by Mabillon and the Benedictine editors of St. Gregory the Great. There are three similar charters for the three monasteries. Yepes gives a fourth, not unlike them in the main, in favor of the monastery of St. Medard, at Soissons, but it is unanimously regarded as false.

dience which St. Gregory professed to the imperial court, even in his most energetic protests against certain of its acts. And nothing contradicts more entirely the chimerical distinction between the Roman emperors and the Barbarian kings, which he attempts to establish in his letter to Phocas.

Gregory did not confine himself to these relations with the princes and bishops of Austrasia and Burgundy. He wrote to Clotharius II., king of Neustria, and to the principal bishops of that portion of Gaul, recommending them to undertake the work of converting the Anglo-Saxons, the object of his special predilection, which he had never lost sight of amid the most serious troubles, and in which Brunehaut co-operated zealously. On this account he also entered into correspondence with the principal bishops of the north and west of Gaul: he enjoined them, as he had urged the bishops of Burgundy and Austrasia, with the most earnest entreaties, to combat the various ecclesiastical abuses, unlawful ordinations, and especially simony, which he everywhere calls heresy, and which made frightful progress every day, disguising itself under a thousand different forms, infecting already all the grades of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in all Christian countries, and threatening to consume like a cancer the vigor and beauty of the Church, thanks to the connivance and complicity of too many bishops.[101]

Relations with the bishops of Neustria.

In all his relations with the bishops, not only of Gaul, but of entire Christendom, he always manifested the affectionate respect with which the episcopal character and form inspired him, and which he had so eloquently expressed in the contest touching the title of universal patriarch. "God forbid," he wrote, "that I should desire to infringe the decrees of our ancestors in any Church, to the prejudice of my colleagues in the priesthood; for I should thus injure myself by interfering with the rights of my brethren." And, elsewhere, "Receive this as certain in matters of ecclesiastical privilege, that we will preserve its rights to each individual Church, as we defend our own. . . . I desire to honor by every means my brethren in the episcopate."[102] At the same time he gave to the jurisdiction of

His respect for the Episcopate.

[101] "Has pestiferas hæreses cernens per sacerdotum conniventiam sive taciturnitatem magis magisque diffusis muneribus quasi pestifer cancer . . . corrodere . . . ac corrumpere." — JOAN. DIAC., *Vit. S. Greg.*, iii. 4.

[102] "Mihi injuriam facio, si patrum meorum jura perturbo." — *Epist.*, ii. 25. "Sicut nostra defendimus, ita singulis quibusque Ecclesiis sua jura servamus. . . . Fratres meos per omnia honorare cupio." — *Epist.*, ii. 47. Compare i. 23, iii. 29.

the Holy See a range and authority which had never been better established. He extended it even to Jerusalem, and beyond the extremities of the Roman world, to Ireland and Iberia. He replied to applications for advice from Caucasus, and encouraged the attempts made to convert Persia. He reduced to due limits the power of the metropolitans, who seemed disposed to assume an authority superior to that of the other bishops, and independent of the Holy See; he settled that none of them should be ordained without the confirmation of the pope. His struggles with the metropolitans of Cagliari, of Ravenna, and, above all, of Salona, were among the greatest trials of his pontificate; but he overcame all resistance. His vigilant eye and eloquent voice everywhere stimulated the re-establishment and exact observance of the canons, and especially the freedom of episcopal elections, which were then in the hands of the clergy and people of each diocese. Very urgent motives were necessary to induce him to limit that liberty, or even indirectly to interfere in that choice. During the vacancy of the see of Milan, when it was announced to him that one of his most intimate friends would be elected, he answered, "I have long resolved never to meddle, for the advantage of any one whatsoever, in the collation of spiritual charges; I shall confine myself to following with my prayers the election which you are about to make, in order that God may grant you a pastor who will lead you in the pastures of the divine word." [103]

And for freedom of elections.

But the less he was disposed to interfere in the designation of those elected, the more he required that they should rigidly fulfil the conditions of canonical laws.[104] He did not simply refuse to recognize a person elected contrary to the canons; he excluded him from all ecclesiastical dignities, and sometimes went so far as to subject him to a penitentiary detention in some monastery, in company with the bishops who had consecrated him.[105] He did not hesitate to depose the bishops who showed themselves unworthy of their charge.[106] Upon those whom he judged worthy he exercised an attentive and indefatigable watchfulness, to constrain them to residence,

His vigilant solicitude for the observance of canonical laws.

[103] "Quia antiquæ meæ deliberationis intentio est ad suscipienda pastoralis curæ onera pro nullius unquam misceri persona, orationibus prosequor electionem vestram." — *Epist.*, iii. 29.

[104] Lau., *op. cit.*, p. 115.

[105] *Epist.*, xiii. 45.

[106] For example, Demetrius, bishop of Naples.

to pastoral visits, and to that great art of preaching which he himself practised with so much eloquence and assiduity even amid the harassments of the supreme pontificate. He recommended them to make their internal life in harmony with the external solemnity of their functions and pious demonstrations; for, said he, prayer is vain if conduct is evil.[107] He was not content with regular morals and irreproachable faith; he would have them besides sufficiently endowed with energy and capacity; for, "in our times," he said, "we must confide power into the hands of those who will not be solely engrossed by the salvation of souls, but will also be mindful of the defence and temporal interests of their inferiors."[108] His truly paternal authority disdained puerile and troublesome homage. He turned away with repugnance from the exaggerated demonstrations of respect towards himself in which certain bishops took pleasure. "I love not," he said, "these vain and foolish exaggerations."[109] He fixed for every five years, instead of every three, the term of the periodical and obligatory visit of the bishops to Rome. The priests and all the orders of the ecclesiastical hierarchy were objects of the same solicitude and severe vigilance.

His correspondence.

His vast correspondence testifies at once to the unwearied activity of his administration, his ardent zeal for justice and discipline, and the increasing development of questions of canonical law and discipline which began to replace, especially in the West, the dogmatic questions which had been sufficiently elaborated in the five general councils held up to that time.

Order re-established in the patrimony of St. Peter.

Those argus eyes which incessantly superintended the Christian world[110] did not pass over the vast domains of the Church which, under the name of the patrimony of St. Peter, were already formed, not only in Gaul, as has been already seen, but in Africa, Corsica, Dalmatia, Sicily, and especially in the south of Italy. Before Gregory, negligence and confusion reigned everywhere in these lands. He neglected no means of re-establishing order and restoring them to their just value. His letters show that he considered no detail beneath him to at-

[107] "Nam inanis fit oratio, ubi prava est actio." — *Epist.*, xi. 51, to the bishops of Sicily.

[108] "Talis hoc tempore in arce regiminis . . . qui . . . de extrinseca subjectorum utilitate et cautela sciat esse sollicitus." — *Epist.*, x. 62.

[109] "Quia vana et stulta superfluitas non delectat." — *Epist.*, i. 36.

[110] "Velut argus quidem luminosissimus per totius mundi latitudinem . . . oculos circumtulerit." — JOAN. DIAC., ii. 55.

tain that end, and that it was his special endeavor to rule them with the most exact justice. The spirit of the disciple of St. Benedict, the monk who, careful, attentive, and just, appreciated so highly the rights of labor, is evident at every step. He wrote to Peter, the administrator of the Roman Church in Sicily, that letter which deserves to be inscribed by the side of the noblest titles of the papacy: "We understand that the price paid for corn to the peasant subjects of the Church is lowered in times of abundance; we desire that they shall always be paid according to the current price. . . . We forbid that the farmers shall pay more than the rate fixed in their lease; and we shall withdraw all the disgraceful exactions which shall exceed the sums prescribed in proportion to their ability. And in order that no one after our death may be able to impose these burdens anew, let them be invested in their lands by a written form which shall state the sum which each one has to pay. . . . We would not have the coffers of the Church soiled with sordid gains." [111]

He protects the peasants.

The devoted friend of the peasants, who had scarcely escaped from the deadly pressure of Roman taxation when they fell into the hands of the Barbarian conquerors, less skilfully rapacious but more brutal, he especially employed his power in reducing their burdens, guaranteeing the freedom of their marriages, the security of their possessions, and the inviolability of their inheritances. He placed at the head of his domains, in each province, no longer laymen, but ecclesiastics imbued with his own spirit, from whom he exacted a promise before the tomb of St. Peter, that they would manage the patrimony of the Church as the treasury of laborers and the poor. He extended this solicitude even beyond the limits of his own possessions; and it is pleasant to see the head of the universal Church turn from his struggles with Byzantium and the Lombards to take in hand the interests of some obscure husbandmen of the island of Sardinia. "I have learned," he wrote to the bishop of Cagliari, "that certain laymen, charged with the administration of your patrimony, have committed depredations to the detriment of your peasants, and refused to render an account:

[111] "Quia nos sacculum Ecclesiæ ex lucris turpibus nolumus inquinari." — *Epist.*, i. 44. Compare ii. 32. In the last we find this often-quoted passage, which indicates at once the simplicity and modesty of the great man: — "You have sent me a bad horse and five good asses. I cannot mount the horse because it is bad, nor the asses because they are asses; if you would help to support us, send us things which are suitable to us." The ecclesiastical domains in Sicily maintained four hundred stallions.

it becomes you, after having examined into this with the utmost rigor, to decide, according to the justice of the case, between your peasants and these men, in order to make them if possible disgorge their prey." [112]

He was everywhere the man of justice and freedom. It was not alone the interests of the Church, its possessions and vassals, which inspired his zeal. He endeavored to defend the rights and liberty of all, by the influence of his spiritual authority and the freedom of his pontifical language, against the exactions, the arbitrary violence, and cruelty of the imperial magistrates; [113] and, addressing himself to the ex-consul Leontius, the envoy of the Emperor Maurice, he sat down this great principle of Christian policy, always ignored, but always undeniable: "You should watch over the liberty of those whom you judge as over your own; and if you would hinder your superiors from trampling your freedom under foot, know how to honor and guard that of your inferiors." [114] The freemen.

All who were oppressed, all the victims of power or wickedness, found in him a champion.[115] He interfered indignantly concerning "the atrocious and unheard-of crime" committed by a vassal of the diocese of Messina, in carrying away his godson's young wife to sell her to another: and threatened with canonical punishment not the guilty person only, but the bishop of the diocese who left such attempts unpunished.[116] The slaves.

It might be said that he anticipated the abolition of slavery in this preamble to an act of enfranchisement. "Since the Redeemer and Creator of the world made himself incarnate in the form of humanity, in order to break the chain of our slavery by the grace of freedom, and to restore us to our pristine liberty, it is well and wise to restore the benefit of original liberty to men whom nature has made free, and whom the laws of men have bowed under the yoke of servitude. For this reason we make you, Montanus and Thomas,

[112] "In rusticorum vestrorum deprædationibus . . . deprehensi. . . . Convenit inter eos Ecclesiæque vestræ rusticos causam examinari subtilius." — *Epist.*, ix. 65.

[113] "Libertatem uniuscujusque hominis contra judicum insolentias liberis vocibus defendebat . . . cunctorum judicum cupiditates vel scelera quasi cuneo frenoque pontificii sui . . . restringebat." — JOAN. DIAC., ii. 47, 48.

[114] "Libertatem eorum . . . ut vestram specialiter attendere debetis . . . subjectorum vestrorum honorando libertatem custodite." — *Epist.*, x. 51.

[115] "Ab adversis potestatibus prægravatos fortissimus miles Christi Gregorius viriliter defendebat." — JOAN. DIAC., iv. 21.

[116] *Epist.*, vi. 13.

servants of the holy Roman Church, which we also serve with the help of God, free from this day, and Roman citizens, and we make over to you all your stock of money." [117] Even in his theological expositions, in his commentaries on Job, this image of slavery still pursues him: "The penitent sinner here below," says he, "is like a slave who has fled from his master, but who is not yet free: he has deserted his sins by contrition, but he must still fear the chastisement. He will be truly enfranchised, truly free, only in heaven, where he can no longer doubt his pardon, where he shall lose even the recollection of his fault, and where he shall taste the serenity and joy of freedom." [118]

Until this terrible stain of slavery could be entirely effaced in the full light of Christianity, Gregory ordained that every pagan or Jewish slave who desired to become a Christian should be freed at the cost of the Church: above all, he would not suffer Christians to remain the slaves of Jews. When he could not free them otherwise by legal means, he caused them to be redeemed out of the ecclesiastical treasury.[119] However, he checked energetically the rigorous measures and popular violence to which the Jews, in the midst of new-born Christendom, were already exposed. His conduct and precepts on this subject formed a striking contrast to the odious persecution then inflicted by the intolerant zeal of the new Christians in Gaul and Spain upon the children of Israel.[120] He strictly interdicted the bishops of Arles and Marseilles from baptizing them by force. He obliged the bishops of Terracina, of Palermo, and Cagliari to restore to them the synagogues from which they had been expelled. "It is by gentleness," he wrote to these prelates, "by benevolence and exhortations that we must lead the unbelievers back to unity, lest we alienate by terrors and menaces those whom charitable preaching and the fear of the last judgment shall not have established in the faith. We

And the Jews.

[117] "Dirupto quo tenebamur capti vinculo servitutis . . . salubriter agitur, si homines, quos ab initio natura liberos protulit, et jus gentium jugo substituit servitutis, in ea qua nati fuerant manumittentis libertate reddantur." — *Epist.*, vi. 12.

[118] "Servus ergo hic jam fugit dominum, sed liber non est. . . . Ibi ergo . . . ubi jam . . . de ejus indulgentia liber exsultet." — *Moral.*, i. iv. c. 36.

[119] "Si quos Christianorum pro longitudine itineris per provincias ab Hebræorum servitio *per legalem violentiam* liberare non poterat, suis pretiis redumendos esse censebat." — Joan. Diac., iv. 44. Compare 46.

[120] Chilperic, king of Neustria, had them baptized by force in 582. Sigibert, king of the Visigoths, made a law in 613 to scourge and exile from Spain all Jews who would not consent to be baptized.

must use such moderation with them that they will not resist us; but we must never constrain them against their will, since it is written, 'Offer yourselves a willing sacrifice.'" [121]

His conduct towards pagans.

It may be affirmed that this sentiment of intelligent and liberal charity was the leading principle of his generous efforts to root out the remains of paganism, as well as those of heresy and schism, from the countries where his authority transcended every other. And if he sometimes appears to derogate from this by rigorous measures, which we lament to find in the history of so noble a life, it must be acknowledge that these fell always far short of the severity authorized by the laws and manners of his time. Thus it is lamentable to see him lend his authority to the corporal punishment of the Barbaricians,[122] a pagan tribe from Africa, whom the Vandals had left in the island of Sardinia; and elsewhere to enjoin, now that a higher rate of taxes should be exacted from the pagans who refused to be converted,[123] and now that the Jews should be allured to baptism by the bait of taking off a third from the rent of their farms.

For this proceeding he gave the melancholy reason which has since served other proselytizers: "If they are not sincerely converted themselves, their children at least will be baptized with better will." [124] But even this was an improvement upon the custom of judges and even bishops, who made the peasants pay for permission to worship their gods, and even continued to extort that tribute after these pagans had been converted. He was careful to interdict all vexatious taxes imposed upon old or new Catholics under pretence of heresy, and every kind of violence against schismatics, however obstinate.[125] He succeeded, notwithstanding, in destroying in Africa the heresy of the Dona-

And the Donatists.

[121] *Epist.*, i. 35; vii. 5, 2.

[122] "Jam Barbaricinos, Sardos et Campaniæ rusticos, tam prædicationibus quam verberibus emendatos a paganizandi vanitate removerat." — JOAN. DIAC., iii. 1.

[123] *Epist.*, iv. 26. I cannot but recall here that, in the eighteenth century, the Puritans of Maryland employed precisely the same means, when they had the majority, to pervert the Catholics whom they had received into that colony, which was founded on the express stipulation of religious liberty for all. — See ED. LABOULAYE, *Histoire des Etats-Unis*, t. i.

[124] *Epist.*, v. 8. This was repeated by Mme. de Maintenon after the revocation of the edict of Nantes.

[125] "Sub prætextu hæresis affligi quempiam veraciter profitentem fidem catholicam non sinamus." — *Epist.*, v. 15. "Schismaticos ad recipiendam satisfactionem venire invitabat, quibus etiam, si nusquam ad unitatem Ec-

tists, which had lasted nearly two centuries, and which had consumed the strength of St. Augustine: he proceeded in this matter with as much prudence as energy, respecting the ancient customs which were not contrary to the Catholic faith, and refusing to approve of the too rigorous measures decreed by the Council of Carthage against all bishops who did not pursue the heretics with sufficient ardor.[126] After this council, held in 594, the Donatists disappear from history.

He puts an end to the schism of the Three Chapters.

He had also the good fortune to terminate the schism of Aquileia, which had for half a century separated from the body of the Church the bishops of Venetia and Istria, obstinate defenders of the *three chapters* condemned at the fifth general council; and although this schism was founded upon a sort of insurrection of Latin or Italian feeling against the intemperate interference of the Eastern emperors on theological questions, Gregory had specially to contend with the artifices used by Byzantine agents to keep up that division.

Services rendered to the Liturgy.

The services which he rendered to the Liturgy are well known. In that particular, no pope has equalled him. Completing and putting in order the work of his predecessors, he gave its definitive form to the holy sacrifice of the mass, and the worship of the Roman Church, in that celebrated Sacramentary, which, retouched and added to during following ages, remains the most august monument of liturgical science. It may also be said that he created, and by anticipation saved, Christian art, by fixing, long before the persecution of the iconoclasts made that the duty of the Church, the true doctrine respecting the worship of images, in that fine letter to the bishop of Marseilles, in which he reproves him for having, in the excess of his zeal against idolatry, broken the statues of the saints, and reminds him that through all antiquity the history of the saints has been represented in pictures; that painting is to the ignorant what writing is to those who can read, and that images are principally useful to the poor.[127]

And to Christian art.

But his name is specially associated, in the history of Catholic worship, with that branch of religious art which

clesiæ redire voluissent, *nullam se facturum violentiam promittebat.*" — JOAN. DIAC., v. 37; *Epist.*, iv. 49. Let us observe also his extreme gentleness towards certain Christians of the island of Corsica who had relapsed into paganism. — *Epist.*, viii. i.

[126] *Epist.*, v. 5.

[127] *Epist.*, xi. 13.

is identified with worship itself, and which is of the utmost moment to the piety as to the innocent joy of the Christian people.[128]

The name of the *Gregorian Chant* reminds us of his solicitude for collecting the ancient melodies of the Church, in order to subject them to the rules of harmony, and to arrange them according to the requirements of divine worship. He had the glory of giving to ecclesiastical music that sweet and solemn, and, at the same time, popular and durable character, which has descended through ages, and to which we must always return after the most prolonged aberrations of frivolity and innovation. He made out himself, in his Antiphonary, the collection of ancient and new chants; he composed the text and music of several hymns which are still used by the Church; he established at Rome the celebrated school of religious music, to which Gaul, Germany, England, all the Christian nations, came in turn, trying with more or less success to assimilate their voices to the purity of Italian modulations.[129] A pleasant legend, much esteemed in the middle ages, shows the great effect which the services of Gregory had produced on all nations. According to this tale, it was in considering the fascination exercised by profane music, that he was led to inquire whether he could not, like David, consecrate music to the service of God. And as he dreamt of this subject one night, he had a vision in which the Church appeared to him under the form of a muse, magnificently adorned, who, while she wrote her songs, gathered all her children under the folds of her mantle; and upon this mantle was written the whole art of music, with all the forms of its tones, notes, and neumes, and various measures and symphonies. The pope prayed God to give him the power of recol-

Gregorian Chant.

[128] In several churches, and during several centuries, a prose, in honor of St. Gregory, was sung before the introit of the first Sunday of Advent, in which occur the following verses: —

"Tradidit hic cantum populis normamque canendi,
Quod Domino laudes referant noctuque dieque."

— Gerbert, *De Cant. et Mus. Sacrii*, t. i. lib. 2, ap. Lau. 245.

[129] All musical historians have quoted the grotesque description which the Italian biographer of St. Gregory gives of the efforts of the Germans and French of the ninth century, to harmonize the songs of the Gregorian school: "Alpina siquidem corpora vocum suarum tonitruis altisone perrepentia, susceptæ modulationis dulcedinem, proprie non resultant: quia bibuli gutturis barbara levitas, dum in flexionibus et repercussionibus mitem nititur edere cantilenam, naturali quodam fragore, quasi plaustra per gradus confuse sonantia rigidas voces jactat." — Joan. Diac., ii. 7.

lecting all that he saw; and after he awoke, a dove appeared, who dictated to him the musical compositions with which he has enriched the Church.[130]

A more authentic memorial is that of the little chamber which he occupied in the school of music, which he had established near the Lateran, and where, three centuries after his death, the bed upon which he reclined while singing was still to be seen, and the whip with which he corrected the children, whose musical education he thus watched over.[131]

His assumed antipathy to classical literature.

Must we now condescend to refute, after the example of many other writers, the calumnious accusations brought against Gregory by blind enemies, and sometimes by imprudent admirers, on the subject of his supposed contempt for literature and science? He is accused of having destroyed the ancient monuments of Rome, burnt the Palatine library, destroyed the writings of Cicero and Titus Livius, expelled the mathematicians from Rome, and reprimanded Bishop Didier of Vienne for teaching grammar to children. None of these imputations, except the last, is founded upon any authority earlier than the twelfth century.[132] The most authentic evidence, on the contrary, exhibits him to us as educated in the schools, as nourished by the wise discipline of ancient Rome, and surrounded by the most learned priests and monks of his time, making the seven liberal arts, as his biographer says, noble pillars of the portico of the apostolical chair.[133]

His contemporary, Gregory of Tours, who visited him in Rome, says of him, that he was unequalled for grammar, dialetics, and rhetoric.[134] He had, doubtless, made many efforts to root out paganism, which perpetuated itself in the literary tastes and popular habits of that Italy, where a short time

[130] "Vidit sanctam Ecclesiam ornatam et compositam quæ quasi musa cantum suum componit . . . quasi gallina pullos . . . et quasi sub uno dragmæ tegmine tabellulæ, ubi scripta erat ars musica, nomina tonorum et neumatum numeri." — JOANN. PRESBYT., *De Musica quomodo per B. Gregorum perinventa*, lib. 3, ap. GERBERT, *op. cit.*, lib. ii., par. ii. c. i.

[131] "Ubi usque hodie lectus ejus in quo recubans modulabatur, et flagellum ipsius . . . cum authentico antiphonario reservatur." — JOAN. DIAC., l. c.

[132] The first author who has mentioned this, and with praise, is John of Salisbury, who died in 1183.

[133] "Septemplicibus artibus veluti columnis nobilissimorum totidem lapidum apostolicæ sedis atrium fulcicbat." — JOAN. DIAC., ii. 13. Compare *ibid.*, c. 14.

[134] "Litteris grammaticis dialecticisque ac rhetoricis ita erat institutus ut nulli in urbe ipsa putaretur esse secundus." — GREG. TURON., *Hist. Franc.*, x. 1.

before St. Benedict had found a temple of Apollo upon the summit of Monte Cassino. He disapproved of bestowing exclusive attention upon mythological subjects, but never either wrote or commanded anything against the study of humane or classical literature. He has, on the contrary, proved at length that this study was a useful preparation and indispensable help to the understanding of sacred literature. He regarded the disgust of certain Christians for literary studies as a temptation of the devil, and added: "The devils know well that the knowledge of profane literature helps us to understand sacred literature. In dissuading us from this study, they act as the Philistines did, when they interdicted the Israelites from making swords or lances, and obliged that nation to come to them for the sharpening of their axes and ploughshares." [135]

He reproved the bishop of Vienne only for devoting himself to reading and teaching the profane poets, to the prejudice of the dignity of his charge, and represented to him that the praises of Jupiter did not come fitly from the same lips which uttered those of Jesus Christ.[136] It is by an exaggeration of humility that, in the dedication of his book upon Job, he shows a scorn of grammar and barbarity of language which is nowhere to be found in his writings. He certainly did not write the Latin of Cicero or even of Tacitus, but he contributed as much as St. Augustine to form the new Latin, the Christian Latin, destined to become the language of the pulpit and the school, and from which all our modern languages have proceeded.[137]

His writings.

It cannot be expected that we should examine, even passingly, the writings of St. Gregory the Great. They largely contributed to procure him this surname; which implies that they are equal to his glory, and have largely contributed to the happy influence of his genius upon the destinies of the Church.

In an age when everything seemed giving way, and in which it was necessary to struggle, not only against the

[135] "Ad hoc tantum liberales artes discendæ sunt ut per instructionem illarum divina eloquentia subtilius intelligatur. . . . A nonnullorum cordibus discendi desiderium maligni spiritus tollunt, ut et sæcularia nesciant et ad sublimitatem spiritualium non pertingant. Aperte quidem dæmones sciunt quia, dum sæcularibus litteris instruimur, in spiritualibus adjuvamur. . . . Cum nos ea discere dissuadent, quid aliud quam ne lanceam ut gladium faciamus præcavent?" — *Liv.* v. *in Primum Regum*, c. xxx. § 30.

[136] "Quia in uno se ore cum Jovis laudibus laudes Christi non capiunt." — *Epist.*, xi. 54.

[137] Ozanam, fragment already quoted.

quibbles of heresy, but especially against exhausted courage, the despair of the vanquished, and the savage pride of the conquerors, he concerns himself less with the necessities of the intellect than with the purification and elevation of the human will. Many of the Fathers of the Church have surpassed him in style and eloquence; his style is too redundant, too evidently marked by the rhetorical habits of a declining age; but no man ever understood the human soul better, analyzed more closely its miseries and necessities, or indicated with greater clearness and energy the remedy for these evils. No one has spoken or written with an austerity greater or better acknowledged by posterity; no one has so completely set forth the constitution and doctrine of the Church. We have already spoken of his *Sacramentary*, which determined the chants, the language and the form of the liturgy, and also of his *Dialogues*, which have been the model of the hagiography of the middle ages. Let us further refer to his *Pastoral*, in which he has collected the rules which should regulate the vocation, life, and doctrine of pastors, and where he mingles his instructions with touching and noble reflections upon his own infirmity. It has been said with justice that this book gave form and life to the entire hierarchical body, and made the bishops who have made modern nations.[138] Then came his admirable works upon Holy Scripture; and above all, the thirty-five books of *Moralia*, or commentaries on the book of Job, begun at Constantinople before his election, and continued during his pontificate, which popularized the secrets of asceticism by developing the loftiest traditions of Biblical interpretation, and were worthy of becoming, through all the middle ages, the text-book of moral theology. In our own days, the portion of his works which is read with greatest interest are his thirteen volumes of *Epistles*, the collection of that immense correspondence by which he conducted, day by day, and according to the necessities of the time, the usual legislation of the Church, in which his unwearied eye visited from Ireland to Caucasus the furthest corners of the Christian world, and in which he has traced at the same time a living picture of his own age, and the annals of that great government of souls, and even of temporal interests, which he exercised with so much justice, prudence, activity, wisdom, and compassion.

The *Moralia*.

His epistles.

[138] Ozanam, unpublished fragment.

His sermons.

He was, besides, an eloquent and unwearied preacher, and esteemed it of the highest importance that this duty should be fulfilled by other bishops as it was by himself.[139] He devoted himself to this without intermission, even in the most serious difficulties of his charge. He was prone to deride those sacred orators who sometimes did not speak enough, and sometimes spoke too much; wordy in superfluous matters, mute in things necessary.[140] His twenty-two homilies on Ezekiel were delivered by him before the people, as has been formerly mentioned, during the siege of Rome by the Lombards. Of his forty homilies upon the Gospel, twenty were preached by himself, and the other twenty were read to the people by a notary, in consequence of the personal sufferings which prevented him from ascending the pulpit.

He was the fourth great doctor of the Church.

A theologian, a philosopher, and an orator, he is worthy of taking his place by that triple title, in the veneration of Christendom, beside Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, to be ranked with them among the four great doctors of the Western Church, and to take his place thus in the first rank of that order of which he himself has said: "In Ecclesia ordo doctorum quasi rex præsidet, quem fidelium suorum turba circumstat."[141]

His extreme humility.

He would never have judged himself worthy of such an honor, for he despised his own works. He composed his *Morals* only at the entreaty of his friend St. Leander, and before sending him the work which was dedicated to him, desired to submit it to the judgment of the various monasteries in Rome. He did not suppose it adapted to become a means of instruction to the Christian world, and was distressed that, in his lifetime, a bishop had read it in public. "So long as I live, I desire, if I succeed in saying something that is good, that men should not know of it."[142] We recognize the humility of the pontiff in the tale which informs us how, seeing a Persian abbot prostrate himself at his feet, he himself knelt before the Oriental to prevent such a homage.[143]

He continues always a monk.

His humility as a monk should be also acknowledged here; which reminds us that it is our special

[139] *Regula Pastoralis*, part iii. c. 25.

[140] "Verbosus in superfluis, mutus in necessariis."

[141] *Moral.*, lib. xx. c. 5.

[142] "Necque enim volo, dum in hac carne sum, si qua dixisse me contigit, ea facile hominibus innotesci." — *Epist.*, xii. 24.

[143] Sophronius. *Pratum Spirituale*, ap. Yepes, t. i. p. 424.

business to show the monk in the great pope, of whom we have, perhaps, spoken at too great length. In his public life, in his immortal reign, and especially in his writings, everything bears the ineffaceable impression of his monastic education and spirit. It only remains for us to tell what he did to regulate and increase the progress of the order of which he was, after St. Benedict, the principal ornament, the second legislator, and, according to some, the true founder in the West.

Services rendered to the monastic order.

Of the services rendered to his order by the first monk who was raised to the papacy, that biography of the holy patriarch which is contained in the second book of the *Dialogues*, and which no one since then has ever undertaken to do over again, must hold the highest place. But he did still more in completing and sanctioning the rule of Benedict by the supreme authority of the apostolical see. In the Council of Rome in 595, he solemnly approved and confirmed this rule.[144]

He confirms the rule of St. Benedict.

He guarantees the liberty and property of the monks.

In the Council of 601, he gave a constitution destined to establish and guarantee the freedom of the monks.[145] This decree commences thus: "The charge which we formerly filled as head of a monastery, has taught us how necessary it is to provide for the tranquillity and security of the monks; and as we know that most of them have had to suffer much oppression and injustice at the hands of the bishops, it concerns our fraternal feeling to provide for their future repose." Then, in the name of Jesus Christ and St. Peter, he interdicts bishops as well as secular persons from diminishing the property, revenues, or titles of monasteries. He ordains that disputes relative to the land claimed in the name of episcopal churches should be decided by the abbots or other arbitrators fearing God. He arranges that after the death of every abbot, his successor should be chosen by the free and unanimous consent of the community, and drawn from its own bosom; that once elected and ordained without fraud or bribery, the

[144] Baronius, *Annal.*, ad an. 595, ex MS. Sublacensi. The authenticity of this charter has been disputed, but it is evident that Gregory sanctioned the rule of St. Benedict either then, or afterwards, by Canon VII. of the Second Council of Douzy, near Sedan, in 874, which says: "Eadem regula S. Spiritu promulgata et laudis auctoritate B. papæ Gregorii inter canonicas scripturas et catholicorum doctorum scripta teneri decreta est."

[145] "Decretum Constituti nomine appellari solitum. . . . Decretum Gregorii papæ de libertate monachorum." — *Not. ad. Concil.*, ed. *Coletti*, t. vi. p. 1343.

abbot could only be deprived of the government of the monastery for crimes provided for by the canons. No monk could be taken from his monastery to be employed in the duties of the secular clergy. Monks ordained priests by the consent of the abbot must leave the monastery. The bishops are further forbidden to proceed with inventories of monastic goods after the death of the abbot, to celebrate public masses in the churches of the monks, drawing the crowd and women there, as also from erecting their own pulpit, or exercising the slightest authority there, except at the desire of the abbot.[146] We desire, said the pope in concluding the proclamation of his decree, that this passage written by us should be always and inviolably observed by the bishops, in order that the monks may not be turned aside from divine service by any trouble or vexation on the part of ecclesiastics or secular persons. All the bishops present at the council answered: "We rejoice in the freedom of the monks, and confirm all that your holiness ordains."[147] And all signed, to the number of twenty, with fourteen cardinal priests, and four deacons of the Roman Church.

Amid the disorders and conflicts which agitated the Church and wasted Christendom, the work of St. Benedict was thus invested with the highest sanction existing upon earth. The free choice of its chiefs, and the inviolability of its property, the two fundamental principles of every independent and regular society, were guaranteed to the monastic order by the most solemn act, emanating from a pope who remembered, and considered himself honored in remembering, that he had been a monk.

Privileges accorded to various monasteries.

Along with this general liberty assured to the entire order, Gregory had conceded analogous and special privileges to several monasteries. He may be regarded as the principal author of what has since been called *exemptions*.[148] In releasing the great com-

[146] "Quam sit necessarium monachorum quieti prospicere . . . anteactum nos officium quod in regimine cœnobii exhibuimus informat, et quia in plerisque monasteriis multa a præsulibus præjudicia et gravamina monachos pertulisse cognovimus, oportet ut nostræ fraternitatis provisio de futura eorum quiete salubri disponat ordinatione. . . . Ut nullus episcoporum seu sæcularium ultra præsumat . . . non extraneus eligatur, nisi de eadem congregatione, quem sibi propria voluntate concors fratrum societas elegerit. . . . Hanc scriptorum nostrorum paginam omni futuro tempore ab episcopis firmam statuimus illibatamque servari." — *Concil.*, l. c.

[147] "Libertati monachorum congaudemus, et quæ nunc de his statuit Beatitudo Vestra firmamus." — *Ibid.*

[148] Several examples of these are instanced prior to his pontificate, and as

munities of Gaul and Italy in various essential points from episcopal jurisdiction, he evidently had in view only to fortify them in spiritual life, and to form so many centres of energetic resistance against the disorders which the different invasions and struggles of diverse races among themselves had made frequent in the ranks of the secular clergy. He said expressly to a community at Rimini, in conferring upon it the exemption it solicited: "You must now all the more be occupied with the work of God, all the more assiduous in prayer, for otherwise you should appear not to have sought greater security for your orisons, but only, which God forbid! to secure your laxness from episcopal severity." [149]

Distinction between monastic and clerical life.

It was also with this aim that he endeavored to enforce a rigorous distinction between the ecclesiastical condition and monastic life, a distinction which completely disappeared in after times. He would not suffer either a priest or a deacon to become an abbot, or even a mere monk, unless he gave up his clerical functions: for, said he, "There are some who, feigning to live as monks, are ambitious of being placed at the head of monasteries, which they destroy by their manner of life." [150] He was very willing that there should be monks in the priesthood to celebrate mass in the communities; [151] above all, he had no intention of interdicting the elevation of monks to sacerdotal or episcopal dignity, of which there were several instances under his pontificate. But every monk called to an ecclesiastical office or benefice was to leave his monastery, never to return.[152] They had to choose between the clerical office and monastic life; for, according to Gregory, each of these vocations is so great in itself, that no man can acquit himself

far back as the first years of the sixth century, but they are not of a sufficiently authentic character. Some authors, however, among others Thomassin (*Vetus et Nova Disciplina*, pars i. lib. iii. c. 30), have maintained that, by his concessions, Gregory did not lessen the spiritual jurisdiction of the bishops over the communities. This appears difficult to prove in presence of the text, which is of a very different tenor. The first exemption given to a monastery in Gaul was by St. Gregory to a community of women founded in honor of John Cassianus, at Marseilles. — *Epist.*, vii. 12.

[149] *Epist.*, ii. 42, ad Luminosum abbatem.

[150] "Dum hi fingunt se religiose vivere monasteriis præponi appetunt, et per eorum vitam monasteria destruuntur." — *Epist.*, v. 1.

[151] *Epist.*, vi. 42.

[152] *Concil.* de 601, p. 1343, *ex. Cod. Flaviniac.* Compare *Epist.*, vii. 43. He would not consent that Urbicus, abbot of St. Hermes and general superior of the Sicilian monasteries, should be elected archbishop of Palermo, "ne eum ad altiora producendo, minorem se ipso fieri missum in fluctibus compellerat."

in it worthily; and far from being able to exercise them together, they mutually injure each other.[153] The experience of Catholic ages has corrected upon that point the pious foresight of Gregory: and even in his own lifetime the new sees established in England by his disciples were filled only by monks.

Reform and consolidation of monastic discipline.

If the experience of monastic life which he had acquired as an abbot helped him to use his authority as pope to promote the peace and freedom of the monks — if he everywhere displayed a constant and efficient solicitude for the consolidation of the order — he always insisted at the same time upon the maintenance and establishment of the strictest discipline. At the time of his advent to the Holy See that discipline was already much relaxed. Monks wandered here and there, some expelled from their asylums by the Lombards, some voluntary deserters from a retirement which they had left in consequence of the too severe authority of one abbot, or the contagious laxness of another. The spirit of the world, the desire of property, the habit of rebellion or license, penetrated into the cloisters which still remained standing and inhabited. Gregory devoted himself to the work of monastic reform, and succeeded in it. He invited the assistance sometimes of the abbots themselves, sometimes of the bishops, and still more frequently of the *defensores*, procurators or syndicts of the Roman Church, whom he maintained in every province. He deposed without pity all the abbots who lived an irregular life.[154] He forbade the bishops to afford shelter to rebellious or vagabond monks, or those who were excommunicated by their abbots.[155] He would not have the Religious wander over the country or from one house to another.[156] To deprive both abbots and monks of all pretext for leaving their monastery, he ordained that each should have a secular and paid procu-

[153] "Satis enim incongruum est, ut cum unum ex his pro sui magnitudine diligenter quis non possit explere, ad utrumque judicetur idoneus: sicque invicem et ecclesiasticus ordo vitæ monachicæ et ecclesiasticis utilitatibus regula monachatus impediat." — *Epist.*, iv. 21. This did not prevent many writers of his time from calling the monks indiscriminately *monachi* or *clerici*: see especially GREGORY OF TOURS, *De Gloria Mart.*, lib. i. c. 75. Compare MABILLON, *Præf. in sac. Bened.* See also in book iv., a reference to cap. 52 of the rule of St. Benedict, upon the originally lax character of the monastic order.

[154] *Epist.*, iii. 23, v. 3, 6.

[155] *Epist.*, vii. 35. An African abbot, called *Cum quo Deus*, had complained to him that his monks fled when he enforced a strict observance of the rule.

[156] *Epist*, i. 41, 42, &c.

rator. He watched especially over the strict observance of monastic continence, to such an extent that monasteries of the two sexes were withdrawn to a distance from each other, and women were rigorously forbidden to enter, upon any pretext whatever, into communities of men. In the islands of the Italian coast, already peopled with monks,[157] and to which the inhabitants of Campania fleeing from the Barbarians had found a refuge, he commanded the rector of the pontifical patrimony to remove all the women.

He was specially desirous to seek out and shut up those monks who had left their communities in order to marry, and against whom the Council of Chalcedon had pronounced excommunication.[158] But even in applying these austere laws, the tender charity and amiable cordiality which distinguished his character always reappeared. A patrician of Syracuse, named Venantius, a great friend of Gregory, became a monk like him; but was afterwards disgusted with monastic life, and married. When Gregory became pope, one of his first cares was to recall himself to the recollection of his old friend, in order to enlighten him upon the seriousness of his condition. "Many fools believed," he wrote to him, "that when I became a bishop I should cease to see you or address you by letter; but it shall not be so, for my charge itself forbids me to be silent. . . . I will speak to you whether it pleases you or not, . . . because I desire above all either to save you, or at least not to be responsible for your loss. You know what habit you have worn, and into what an abyss you have fallen. . . . If Ananias merited the death you know of, for having stolen from God the pieces of money which he had offered to Him, think what you should merit who have stolen away from God not money, but yourself, after having dedicated yourself to Him under the monastic habit. I know well that as soon as my letter arrives, you will assemble your friends and literary clients, and consult upon this vital question those who have abetted your death. These people, like those who led you to crime, tell you only what will please you, because they love not yourself but what you have. If you need a counsellor take me, I beseech you. No one could be more faithful, for it is

Venantius, the married monk.

[157] Especially in the islands of Monte Christo and Gorgone. The life in these island monasteries was so difficult that Gregory forbade the reception of young people under eighteen, and ordered that all who were below that age should be sent back to Rome.

[158] *Epist.*, i. 42.

you I love and not your fortune. May Almighty God teach your heart to understand how much my heart loves and embraces you in everything that does not offend divine grace. And if you believe that I love you, come to the threshold of the apostles, and make use of me as your adviser. If you distrust the excess of my zeal, I offer you the advice of the whole Church, and I will willingly subscribe to whatever they decide by common accord." [159]

Venantius was deaf to the voice of the pontiff. Gregory notwithstanding remained his friend; he continued to write to him and also to his wife.[160] Ten years later, when they were both old and sick, he returned to the affectionate eloquence of his first exhortations. He entreated the bishop of Syracuse to neglect no means of leading Venantius, now a widower, to take again, if only on his deathbed, the monastic habit; and after the death of his friend he took under his special protection the two daughters whom he had left exposed to all kinds of dangers. The pope interested himself with his usual zeal in their fate and fortune; he wrote to them himself, engaged them to come to Rome to be near him, and was as a father to these orphans, whom he always called *his dearest daughters.*[161]

Female monasteries.

He took an equal interest in the discipline and prosperity of female convents.[162] The three sisters of his father had been nuns, and this domestic tie naturally increased his interest and enlightened his vigilance in respect to communities of virgins consecrated to God. A decree of his predecessor, Leo I., in conformity with several

[159] "Multi hominum stulti . . . putaverunt . . . te alloqui et per epistolas frequentare recusarem. . . . In quo habitu fueris recolis . . . ad quid sis delapsus agnoscis. . . . Scio quia cum epistola mea suscipitur, protinus amici conveniunt, literati clientes vocantur. . . . Consiliarium, rogo, me suscipe. . . . Quidquid omnibus fieri salubriter placet, ego in nullo contradico." — *Epist.*, i. 34.

[160] *Epist.*, ix. 123.

[161] "Dulcissimæ filiæ." — *Epist.*, xi. 35, 36, 78.

[162] *Epist.*, iv. 9; v. 6, 24. There were from the first nuns of several kinds; most of them lived in communities, but others were solitary recluses, or, indeed, lived in their families, wearing the veil: various errors resulted from these two last methods, to which the popes and councils put an end. In his *Dialogues* St. Gregory speaks of several holy nuns, entitling them *Ancilla Christi*, *Deo devota*, *confessa*, *reclusa*; he gives them also the name of *monialis*, which was afterwards the term generally used.

The three aunts of St. Gregory were nuns of some domestic order; he speaks of them thus: "Tres pater meus sorores habuit, quæ cunctæ tres sacræ virgines fuerunt . . . uno omnes ardore conversæ, uno eodemque tempore sacratæ, sub districtione regulari degentes, in domo propria socialem vitam ducebant." — *Hom.* 38, *in Evang.*

ancient councils, and confirmed by a law of the Emperor Majorian in 458, had ordained that nuns should not receive the veil and the solemn benediction without a novitiate which lasted up to their fortieth year.[163] Gregory ordained that the abbesses, chosen by the communities, should be at least sixty, and should possess an irreproachable reputation.[164] His paternal generosity provided for the necessities of the nuns who had taken refuge at Rome from the ruined monasteries of Italy, to the number of three thousand, and who suffered much from the cold during the hard winter of 597, leading all the while a most edifying life. "Rome owes to their prayers, their tears, and fasts," he wrote to the sister of the Emperor Maurice, "its deliverance from the swords of the Lombards."[165]

He proscribes the *peculiarity*.

It has been already seen with what rigor he pursued, as abbot among the Religious, that offence which monastic phraseology called *péculiarité*, or the vice of personal property. As pope, he displayed the same severity. He refused to confirm the election of an abbot whom he knew to be stained with this vice. "I know that he loves property," he wrote, "which shows that he has not the heart of a monk. . . . If this love existed among us, there would be neither concord nor charity. What is monastic life, if not contempt of the world? and how can we say that we depise the world if we seek its gain?"[166] The monks were debarred from making wills, as well as from possessing property of their own. In a council held at Rome in 600, the abbot Probus, who had succeeded Gregory as superior of the monastery of St. Andrea, obtained, by special grace, the power of making his will in favor of his son, and that only in consequence of the pope's declaration that, being a mere recluse, he had been, in spite of himself, made abbot of a monastery in which he was not even a monk, without time being given him to dispose of his possessions before entering.

He watches over the sincerity of vocations.

The legitimacy and sincerity of religious vocations was still further the object of Gregory's special vigilance. It is evident from his writings that he

[163] These decrees only applied to the benediction or solemn profession, and did not prevent young girls from consecrating their virginity to God from infancy, as has been proved by a multitude of examples. This question has been thoroughly discussed by THOMASSIN, *Vetus et Nova Ecclesiæ Disciplina*, pars i. lib. 3, c. 58.

[164] *Epist.*, iv. 11.

[165] *Ibid.*, vii. 26.

[166] "Cognovi quod peculiaritati studeat, quæ res maxime testatur cum cor monachi non habere." — *Epist.* xii. 24.

had particularly studied the conditions proper to enlighten and decide Christians upon their spiritual vocation. In religious life itself, he would have none give himself up to a life of contemplation until he had been long and seriously tried in active life. "In order," he said, "to attain the citadel of contemplation, you must begin by exercising yourself in the field of labor." He insists at length upon the dangers of contemplative life for unquiet and presumptuous minds, who run the risk, by pride, of aspiring to surpass the powers of intellect, and of leading the weak astray, while they wandered astray themselves. "Whoever," he adds, "would devote himself to contemplation ought necessarily to examine himself thoroughly, to ascertain to what point he can love. For it is love which is the lever of the soul. This alone can raise it up, and, snatching it from the world, give it full power of wing, and make it soar into the skies." [167]

This intelligent study of the moral and internal life of the Religious rendered him only more attentive to the means by which the always increasing population of the monasteries was kept up. He enjoined a married man, who had become a monk in a Sicilian convent without the consent and simultaneous conversion of his wife, to return to her, marking thus, in his letter, the difference between divine and human laws concerning the indissolubility of marriage.[168] He forbade the superiors to give the monks the tonsure — that is, to receive them finally into the monastic order — before they had proved their conversion by a two years' novitiate: this was a year more than St. Benedict had fixed.[169] He was especially desirous that this serious novitiate, during which the lay dress was still worn, should try the disposition of the multitude of laymen, and above all, of slaves, belonging either to the Church or to secular masters, who sought an asylum in the monasteries, in order to change human servitude for the service of God. In the preamble of the decree which dealt with this matter in the Council at Rome in 595, it is said, "If we allow this to go on, all the lands of the Church will be abandoned; and if we repulse them without examination, we take away something from God who has given us all. It is necessary, then, that

He doubles the length of the novitiate.

[167] "Necesse est ut quisquis ad contemplationem studia properat se metipsum subtiliter interroget, quantum amat. Machina quippe mentis est vis amoris: quæ hanc dum a mundo extrahit, in alta sustollit." — *Moralia*, liv. vi. c. 37.

[168] *Epist.*, xi. 50.

[169] *Ibid.*, x. 24.

he who would give himself to God should first be tried in his secular dress, in order that, if his conduct shows the sincerity of his desire, he may be freed from the servitude of man to embrace a more rigorous service."[170] Slaves could become monks, according to a law of Justinian, without the consent of their masters, but had to be enfranchised by payment of their value: the slave who had become a monk, and showed himself unfaithful to his new vocation, ran the risk of being sent back to his former master.[171]

In all this vast correspondence, by which Gregory in a manner took possession of the West for the papacy, I know not a more touching letter than one which he addressed to the sub-deacon of the Roman Church in Campania, on the subject of a young slave who was desirous of becoming a nun. "I understand that the defensor Felix possesses a young woman called Catella, who seeks with tears and vehement desire to take the veil, but whose master will not permit her to assume it. Now, I desire that you go to Felix and demand of him the soul of this girl: you shall pay him the price he wants, and send her here under the charge of competent persons, who will conduct her to a monastery. And do it speedily, that your delay may not put this soul in danger."[172]

The young slave Catella.

His exertions for the propagation of the Benedictine order were powerful and perpetual. He devoted a portion of the patrimony of the Church to

Monastic foundations.

[170] "Cum ad clericalem professionem tam ex ecclesiastica quam ex sæculari militia quotidie pœne innumerabilis multitudo confluceret, nequaquam eos ad ecclesiastici decoris officium, sed ad capiendum solummodo monachicum propositum . . . suscipiendos censebat." — JOAN. DIAC., ii. 16. "Multos de ecclesiastica familiâ seu sæculari militia novimus ad omnipotentis Dei servitium festinare ut ab humana servitute liberi in divino servitio valeant familiarius in monasteriis conversari. . . . Necesse est ut quisquis ex juris ecclesiastici vel sæcularis militiæ servitute Dei ad servitium converti desiderat, probetur prius in laico habitu, et si mores ejus . . . in monasterio, servire permittatur, ut ab humano servitio liber recedat qui in divino amore districtiorem subire appetit servitutem." — *Epist.*, iv. 44, ed. *Coletti Append.* v. ed. *Bened.* Mabillon (*Ann. Bened.*, lib. viii. c. 61), Fleury (lib. 35, c. 43), and Lau (p. 236), are all agreed in applying the terms of this decree to slaves. Such grave authorities must be respected; yet, in recurring to the expressions of John the Deacon, which we quote above, we should be tempted to believe that it did not refer to those who fled from slavery properly so called, but only the ordinary service of the Church and State, or of secular life.

[171] *Epist.*, v. c. 34.

[172] "Volumus ut experientia tua præfatum Felicem adeat, atque puellæ ejusdem animam sollicite requirat . . . pretium ejusdem puellæ suæ domino præbeat. . . . Ita vero age, ut non per lentam actionem tuam." — *Epist.*, iii. 40.

found new monasteries in Italy. He erected the earliest religious houses in the island of Corsica. He confided to the monks the guardianship and service of several ancient churches, like that of St. Pancratius at Rome, and especially that of St. Apollinaris or *Classe*, near Ravenna, a celebrated and sumptuous basilica, built by Justinian at the capital of the Byzantine and Ostrogoth government in Italy, upon the site chosen by Augustus as a port for his fleets in the Adriatic.[173] This new monastery, destined to become one of the principal centres of monastic life in Italy, received from Gregory the most extended privileges, to protect it against the encroachments of the clergy of Ravenna, who were noted for their readiness to invade the neighboring monasteries. The archbishop of Ravenna, Marinian, although he had himself been a monk with Gregory, and was his old friend, saw with displeasure that great community exempted from his full jurisdiction, and this was the occasion of one of the disputes which disturbed their old friendship.[174]

Abbey of Classe.

These new foundations did not make him forget the old homes of monastic fervor. He congratulated the abbot of Lerins on the satisfactory account which he had transmitted by his legate Augustine, of the regularity and unanimity which still reigned in that famous isle. It is touching to see the apostle of England acting thus as intermediary between the great pope who had issued from the new Benedictine order, and the most illustrious monastery of ancient Gaul; and we love to learn, by the letter of St. Gregory, that his paternal heart appreciated the alms which came from Lerins in the shape of dishes and spoons, sent by the abbot for the service of the poor in Rome.[175]

Relations with Lerins,

He extended his protection to the monks in the East as well as in the West. In the beginning of his pontificate, he interfered with energy and perseverance between the patriarch of Constantinople and an abbot of the mountains of Isauria, in Asia Minor, who was accused of heresy, and whom the patriarch had caused to be beaten in one of the churches of the imperial city. Through this prolonged contest, he maintained, with his usual constancy, the observance of canons and the rights of innocence, which were equally outraged by the haughty rival of Roman supremacy.[176] He gave to another abbot of Isauria a grant

With the monks of Isauria,

[173] Fabbri, *Memor. di Ravenna*, pp, 103, 113, 339.
[174] *Epist.*, vi. 29.
[175] "Cochleares et circulos." — *Epist.*, vi. 56.
[176] *Epist.*, iii. 53; vi. 66; vii. 34.

from the revenues of the Roman Church more considerable than he asked, to relieve the necessities of his distant monastery.[177] He sent beds and clothing to St. John Climachus, abbot of Mount Sinai, for the pilgrims who sought that sanctuary.[178] He sent monks from his own convent in Rome to Jerusalem, to found a hospital there. The rule of St. Benedict, carried thus upon the wings of charity, penetrated into the East, and established itself amid the sons of Basil to await the Crusaders.[179]

And of Jerusalem.

In his great correspondence he never ceased to extol and regret monastic life. Overwhelmed with cares, labors, and struggles, his thoughts always returned to the happy days which he had passed under the Benedictine frock. "I sailed before the wind," he wrote to his friend St. Leander, bishop of Seville, "when I led a tranquil life in the cloister: now the tempest has seized me; I have lost my course; my mind has made shipwreck. Beaten by the waves, I seek the plank of your intercession for me, in order that, not being worthy to return rich with my ship safe and sound into port, I may at least struggle to shore by that plank."[180] He indemnified himself as he best could, by surrounding himself with his former brethren; and procured a decree for that purpose from the council held at Rome in 595, that the lay and secular officers who rendered private service to the popes should be replaced by clerical attendants, and even by monks, chosen with care, to be witnesses of his entire life. With those whom he had thus procured to be the familiar companions of his privacy, he applied himself to follow as far as possible, in his studies, occupations, and daily and nightly prayers, the customs of a monastery; so that the pontifical palace offered a picture of that church of the apostolical times of which monastic life was the most faithful image.[181]

He always regretted his loss of monastic life.

And surrounded himself with monks.

Most of the monks whom he thus associated with his daily labors were drawn from his old monastery of St. An-

[177] *Epist.*, v. 38.

[178] *Ibid.*, xi. 1.

[179] Joan. Diac., ii. 52.

[180] "Quasi prospero vento navigabam. . . . Saltem post damna ad littus per tabulam reducar." — *Epist.*, ix. 121.

[181] "Remotis a suo cubiculo sæcularibus, clericos ibi prudentissimos consiliaros familiaresque delegit, . . . monachorum vero sanctissimos sibi familiares elegit. . . . Cum quibus die noctuque versatus nihil monasticæ perfectionis in palatio, nihil pontificalis institutionis in Ecclesia dereliquit. . . . Cum eruditissimis clericis religiosissimi monachi. . . . Talem ecclesiam Romanam exhibuit qualis prima sub Apostolis fuit." — Joan. Diac., ii. 12.

drea, in the inhabitants of which he had always an affectionate confidence. He promoted several to the episcopate, the most notable of whom were Maximin and Marinian,[182] whom he made archbishops — one in Sicily, the other at Ravenna; and afterwards Augustine, who was the apostle and first metropolitan of England. He loved to employ them as his legates, and to make them his representatives with princes whose alliance he sought in the interests of the Church. Probus, whom we have already mentioned, and who succeeded him as abbot of St. Andrea, established peace between the King of the Lombards and the exarch of Ravenna; and Cyriac, who succeeded Probus in the government of the same abbey, was successively sent, as legate in Sardinia, to preach the faith to the unbelievers, and to Queen Brunehaut in Burgundy, and King Recarede in Spain, to root out simony, and the intrusion of laymen into the episcopate. The pope was not always equally fortunate in the bestowal of his confidence: witness that Greek monk, Andrew, who served as his interpreter in his correspondence with the Eastern bishops (for Gregory knew no Greek), and who had to be punished for falsifying his translations, and attributing to the pontiff expressions which he had never used.[183]

He made some of them bishops and legates.

Surrounded and assisted by his dear companions of old, Gregory brought from his monastery into the exercise of the sovereign pontificate that prodigality of alms and unwearied solicitude for the poor which he had learned and long practised at St. Andrea. He invited twelve poor pilgrims to his table every day, and served them, after having washed their hands or their feet, as he was accustomed to do while an abbot.[184] Every month he distributed to his poor, according to the season, corn, wine, cheese, vegetables, fish, and oil; adding perfumes and other more delicate presents for the considerable people of the town, so as to make them regard the Church as the storehouse of the world.[185] He organized the regular

His alms and hospitality worthy of his past monastic life.

[182] Marinian, who had long lived in the same monastery with Gregory, was elected, in spite of his own reluctance, and despairing of success, by the people of Ravenna, whose two previous elections the pope had refused to confirm. Gregory had, in the end, on more than one occasion, to reprimand and oppose his old friend.

[183] *Epist.*, vii. 32; xi. 74.

[184] Joan. Diac., ii. 22, 23.

[185] "Ita ut nihil aliud quam communia quædam horrea communis putaretur Ecclesia." — *Ibid.*, 26.

service of charity in Rome with wise zeal; and carriages traversed the various quarters and streets daily, carrying help to the sick poor and those who were ashamed to beg;[186] to the latter he sent dishes from his own table, which he blessed for the use of his poor friends, before he touched his own repast. Two centuries after his death, the voluminous list of the poor who shared his alms in Rome, and also in the surrounding towns and on the coast, was still preserved.[187] A beggar having been found dead, in a distant quarter of the town, he feared that the unfortunate man had died of famine, and, reproaching himself with having been his murderer, he abstained for several days from celebrating mass.[188]

His great sufferings.

This spirit, so sensitive to the griefs of others, was itself a prey to the most painful infirmities. The gout made the last years of his life a kind of martyrdom. The cry of pain appears in many of his letters. "For nearly two years," he wrote to the patriarch of Alexandria, "I have been imprisoned to my bed by such pangs of gout that I can scarcely rise for two or three hours on great holidays to celebrate solemn mass. And the intensity of the pain compels me immediately to lie down again, that I may be able to endure my torture, by giving free course to my groans. . . . My illness will neither leave me nor kill me. I entreat your holiness to pray for me, that I may be soon delivered, and receive that freedom which you know, and which is the glory of the children of God."[189] To a pious patrician lady, whom he forbade to call herself his servant, and who suffered from the same malady: "My body," he said, "is wasted as if it was already in the coffin; I cannot leave my bed. If gout can reduce to such a point the corpulent mass you have known me, how shall it fare with your always attenuated frame?"[190] And finally, to his former brother, the archbishop of Ravenna: "For a long time I have ceased to get up; sometimes I am tortured by the gout, sometimes a kind of burning pain spreads

Last letters of friendship and sadness.

[186] "Quotidianis diebus per omnes regionum vicos, vel compita . . . per constitutos veredarios. . . . Verecundioribus . . . ostiatim dirigere curabat scutellam." — JOAN. DIAC., ii. 28.

[187] "Prægrande volumen." — *Ibid.*

[188] *Ibid.*

[189] "Ut cruciatum meum possim interrumpente gemitu tolerare. . . . In illam quam bene nostis libertatem gloriæ filiorum Dei." — *Epist.*, xi. 32.

[190] "Quem qualis fuerim nostis. . . . Si ergo mei molem corporis, . . . quid de vestro corpore sentiam, quod nimis siccum ante dolores fuit?" — *Epist.*, xi. 44.

over all my body, and takes all courage from me. . . . I say, in a word, I am infected with this pernicious humor to such an extent, that life is a burden to me, and that I wait for and desire death as the sole remedy. Provided only that my sins, which these pangs ought to purify, be not aggravated by my murmurs!" [191]

His own suffering did not render him less attentive to the misery of his neighbor. From his bed of pain he wrote to the same Marinian, his old friend and companion in monastic life: "A man from Ravenna has plunged me into grief by telling me that you were attacked by blood-spitting. We have consulted all the physicians with the greatest care upon your case, and transmit to you what they say. Silence and repose are necessary to you above everything; you will scarcely find them in your metropolis. . . . You must come to me before the summer, in order that I, helpless though I am, may specially watch your illness, and be the guardian of your repose, for the doctors say that the danger is specially great in summer. . . . It is very important that you should return to your church cured. And then for myself, who am so near death, if God call me before thee, I would die in thine arms. . . . If thou comest, come with few servants, for thou shalt lodge in my palace, and the people of this Church will serve thee." [192]

"It is fine," says one of our contemporaries who knows the secrets of sanctity and charity, "to see an existence so short and troubled suffice for such works. We love to find human weakness in great men. Antique heroism is made of marble and bronze; we admire, but we do not imitate it. But Christianity has put the souls of heroes in hearts of flesh. It destroys nothing of the innocent weakness of nature; it finds its strength there. We are not made of stone." [193]

Amid these insupportable sufferings, and up to his last moments, he continued with unwearied activity to dictate his correspondence, and to concern himself with the interests of the Church and of monasteries. One of his last epistles was to solicit the punishment of a soldier who had seduced a

[191] *Epist.*, xi. 32.

[192] "Veniente quodam Ravennate homine. . . . Sollicite et singillatim eos quos hic doctos lectione novimus medicos tenuimus inquiri . . . ut . . . ego . . . in quantum valeo, quietem tuam custodiam. . . . Ipse valde sum debilis. . . . Inter tuas manus transire debeam . . . cum paucis tibi veniendum est, quia mecum in episcopio manens." — *Epist.*, xi. 33.

[193] Ozanam, unpublished fragment.

Dies.

nun.[194] He died on the 12th March 604, aged nearly fifty-five, in the thirteenth year of his pontificate. He was buried in St. Peter's; and in the epitaph engraved on his tomb, it is said, that "after having conformed all his actions to his doctrine, the consul of God went to enjoy eternal triumph."[195]

Ingratitude of the Romans.

He had, like so many other great hearts, to struggle with ingratitude, not only during his life, but after his death. If we may believe his biographer, Rome was afflicted with a great famine under his successor Sabinian, who put an end to the charities which Gregory had granted to the poor, on the plea that there was nothing remaining in the treasury of the Church. The enemies of the deceased pope then excited the people against him, calling him the prodigal and waster of Roman patrimony; and that ungrateful people, whom he had loved and helped so much, began to burn his writings, as if to annihilate or dishonor his memory. But one of the monks who had followed him from the monastery to the pontifical palace, his friend, the deacon Peter, interposed. He represented to the incendiaries that these writings were already spread through the entire world, and that it was, besides, sacrilege to burn the work of a holy doctor, upon whom he swore he had himself seen the Holy Spirit hovering under the form of a dove.[196] And as if to confirm his oath, after having ended his address, he breathed forth his last sigh, a valiant witness of truth and friendship.[197]

He is avenged by posterity.

Prosperity has sufficiently avenged Gregory of that wrong. In him it has recognized a man whose name stands out like a pharos in the night of the past. The highest personification of that papacy which neglected no exertions to save the East, and which vivified the West by delivering it from the Byzantine yoke, is found in him. The judgment of St. Ildefonso, who was almost his contemporary, and who declared that he was greater than Anthony in sanctity, Cyprian in eloquence, and Augustine in knowledge, has been repeated by posterity.[198]

Bossuet has summed up his life with that terseness which

[194] *Epist.*, xiv. 10.

[195] "Implebatque actu quidquid sermone docebat. . . .
Hisque, Dei consul factus, lætare triumphis,
Nam mercedem operum jam sine fine tenes."

[196] Thence the custom, in art, during the middle ages, of always representing St. Gregory with a dove whispering to him.

[197] "Confessor veritatis meruit sepeliri." — JOAN. DIAC., vi. 69. Compare PAUL. DIAC., *Vit. Greg.*, c. 24.

[198] *De Vir. Illustr.*, c. 1.

includes everything, and which belongs only to himself. "This great pope . . . subdued the Lombards; saved Rome and Italy, though the emperors could give him no assistance; repressed the new-born pride of the patriarchs of Constantinople; enlightened the whole Church by his doctrine; governed the East and the West with as much vigor as humility; and gave to the world a perfect model of ecclesiastical government."

Let us, however, add and repeat, to justify ourselves for lingering thus upon his pontificate, that he was the restorer of monastic discipline, the protector, propagator, and legislator of the monks of the West; that he had nothing more at heart than the interests of monastic life; finally, that it was the Benedictine order which gave to the Church him whom no one would have hesitated to call the greatest of the popes, had not the same order, five centuries later, produced St. Gregory VII.

His true grandeur.

The human race, in its weakness and folly, has always decreed the highest place in its admiration to conquerors, governors of nations, and masters of the world, who have done great things, but who have done them only by great means, with a frightful expense of men, money, and falsehood, trampling laws, morality, and sworn faith under foot. A detestable error, which renders the ignorant and innocent involuntary accomplices of all these startling crimes, the applauses of which they echo from one to the other. The merit of success is small when the conqueror shrinks at nothing, and recoils from no sacrifice of life, virtue, or truth. Even in its human aspect, supreme greatness is not there. That consists in working great results by small means, in triumphing over strength by weakness, and especially in surmounting obstacles and vanquishing adversaries with a respect for law, virtue, and truth. This is what Gregory desired and what he accomplished. He is truly Gregory the Great, because he issued irreproachable from numberless and boundless difficulties; because he gave as a foundation to the increasing grandeur of the Holy See, renown of his virtue, the candor of his innocence, the humble and inexhaustible tenderness of his heart.

III. — THE MONKS IN SPAIN.

We shall shortly be called upon to exhibit the all-powerful influence of St. Gregory, as pope and monk, upon the great

and celebrated island which owes to him its final conversion to the Christian faith; but at present it is fit that we should cast a glance upon another country, the destinies of the Church and monastic order in which are also connected, though less directly, with his memory. Let us cross Spain before we reach England.

During the time of his residence as nuncio at Constantinople, towards the year 580, Gregory, as has been seen, met with a Spanish monk called Leander, who was honored by the double consecration of the bishopric and exile.

Spain conquered by the Arian Visigoths.

Spain, from the time of the great invasion of the Roman empire by the Germanic races, had been shared among the Sueves, Alans, and Vandals, and had finally fallen into the hands of the Visigoths, who had for two centuries established themselves there, and who were now, by union with the kingdom of the Sueves in 585, its sole masters. These Visigoths were considered the least barbarous of the Barbarians. They certainly could appreciate and respect better than the others the work of Roman and Christian civilization, in those regions from whence Seneca and Lucan, Quintillian and Silius, had thrown so much lustre on the decline of Roman literature, and from whence, succeeding many illustrious martyrs, the Fathers of the Council of Elvira, such as the great bishop Osius, who presided at the Council of Nicæa, had honored and consoled the Church in her decisive struggles against imperial persecution. But like all the Gothic race, like Theodoric and the other successors of Alaric, the Visigoths had received Christianity only through the channel of Arianism; through their means Spain was now overrun by it. This was the scourge from which she was delivered by the monk of Seville, the friend of Gregory.

Monastic beginnings in Spain.

However, before the time of Gregory and Leander, and even before St. Benedict, Christian Spain had already become acquainted with the monastic order, and found in it a precious succor against the Arianism of her conquerors. Authorities are not agreed upon the precise date of its introduction into the Iberian peninsula.[199] According to some, it was the African St. Donatus who, flying with seventy monks from the Barbarians, was received in Valentia by a noble lady called Minicea, and founded, with

[199] The work entitled, *Vindiciæ Antiquitatum Monasticarum Hispaniæ adv. Cæt. Cennium, Opera. D. Gabr. Mar.* Scarmallii, *Abbat. SS. Flor. et Lucill*, Arrettii, 1752, may be consulted on this subject. Scarmaglio even quotes a decree of the Council of Saragossa, in 381, which already made mention of the monks. — *Dissert.* ii. c. 1, No. 5.

her help, the monastery of Servitanum, the most ancient in Spain.[200] It is certain that every province and canton had soon its monastery. The mountains which stretched from the Pyrenees towards the Ebro, in Biscay and Navarre, were peopled with hermits who gradually adopted a life in common, conforming generally to the rule of St. Benedict. It was professed[201] by St. Emilian, who was one of the most celebrated aud popular monks of Spain. At first a shepherd in the mountains of La Rioja, in Aragon, he led his flocks to the wildest gorges, and, charming the solitude by the sounds of his guitar, learned to open his soul to celestial harmonies. He became a hermit, and lived thus for forty years; then he became a monk and abbot, and died a centenarian in 574, after having startled by his miracles and austerities the two nations, the Sueves and Visigoths, who still disputed the possession of the country.[202]

St. Emilian. 574.

The Sueves, who occupied the entire north-east of Spain, and who were much attached to Arianism, had for their apostle, at the same period, a monk named Martin, born in Hungary, like his famous namesake, St. Martin of Tours. He introduced the rule of St. Benedict into the regions which are now Galicia and the northern part of Portugal. He was himself the abbot of Dumes, at the gates of the metropolitan city of Braga, of which he became bishop, remaining at the same time abbot of his monastery.[203] By his writings, his virtues, and his influence, he led back the greater part of the Sueve nation to Catholic unity, at least for a time, and until the new persecution which preceded the great defeat of Arianism.

St. Martin of Dumes. 580.

[200] From the acts of the Councils of 516 and 524, it is apparent that there had been monks in Spain before the middle of the sixth century, the time generally assigned to the coming of St. Donatus. Mabill., *Præf. sæc.* 1. *Bened.*, n. 23 and 72; *Ann. Bened.*, lib. iii. c. 26–37; Bulteau, t. i. pp. 305, 317. According to others, the most ancient monastery of Spain was Asane, near Huesca, in Aragon, founded about 506, and of which St. Victorian was abbot for sixty years. Fortunatus says of him, in his epitaph —

"Plurima per patriam monachorum examina fundens,
Floribus æternis mellificavit apes."

[201] Act. SS. O. B., *Præf. in sæc.* 1, § 74, and t. i. p. 197.

[202] See his life by St. Braulio, bishop of Saragossa in the seventh century, ap. Act. SS. O. B., t. i. p. 197. "Minabat oves ad interiora montium. . . . Citharam vehebat, ne ad greges custodiam torpor impeditamentum." — *Ibid.*, p. 200. The monastery founded over his tomb, and called San Milan of Cogolla, became one of the most important in Spain.

[203] Dumes was erected into a bishopric in 562, and this St. Martin died in 580. Gregory of Tours makes mention of him, *Hist.*, v. 38, and *De Mirac. S. Martini*, i. 11.

But the victory of orthodoxy was final, and the extension of the Benedictine order became a great fact for the Church and Spain, only under the pontificate of Gregory, and by the preponderating influence of an illustrious and holy family, the first glory of which was the monk-bishop Leander.

St. Leander monk and bishop of Seville.

Born in that Andalusia where the Vandals had fortunately left only their name, Leander was the son of a duke, probably of Greco-Roman race,[204] but whose eldest daughter married Leuvigild, the king of the Visigoths. He embraced monastic life early, and drew from it that spirit of self-devotion and discipline, which gained him the honor of exercising supreme influence over the future destiny of his country. He was a monk at Seville itself, which had been up to that time the capital of the Visigoth kings, and of which he became metropolitan bishop in 579.[205] In that city which was considered the holy city, the Jerusalem of the south of Spain, he formed, under the shadow of his see, a school, which was designed to extend at once the orthodox faith and the study of all the arts and sciences.[206] He himself presided over the exercises of the learned masters and numerous pupils whom he attracted to it. Among these pupils were the two sons of the king, his own nephews, Hermenegild and Recarede. He succeeded in winning over from Arianism the elder of the two, and his example was followed by many others. Hermenegild was confirmed in the faith of Nicæa by his wife Ingonde, a French princess of the orthodox race of Clovis, the daughter of King Sigebert, and of the celebrated Brunehaut, who was herself the daughter of a king of the Visigoths. The young Ingonde resisted heroically the brutal violence which her mother-in-law employed to make her embrace Arianism, and gave thus to her husband an example of that constancy which was afterwards to lead him to martyrdom.

School of Seville.

Leuvigild, in transferring the capital of the kingdom of the Visigoths from Seville to Toledo, had associated his eldest son with himself in the government, and assigned him Seville for his residence. But soon persecution arose, and with it civil war. Leuvigild

Persecution of the Catholics under Leuvigild.

[204] This is implied in his name, Severianus, and those of all his children: Leander, Isidore, Fulgentius, Theodora, Florentine. The Byzantine emperors had still some possessions in Spain.

[205] He was also bishop for some time of St. Claude of Leon, in the north of Spain. — Yepes, *Cent. Secund.* Compare Act. SS. O. B., t. i. p. 372.

[206] M. l'Abbé Bourret published in 1855 a remarkable thesis, entitled *L'Ecole Chrétienne de Séville sous la Monarchie des Visigoths.*

shrank from no means of extending heresy; he gained over even some bishops, and condemned to prison or exile those who, like Leander, resisted his violence. He won about the same time the crown of the Sueves, a nation then scarcely restored to the orthodox faith, and carried persecution and all its terrors among them. The holy abbot Vincent was sacrificed, with twelve of his monks, before the door of his own monastery at Leon, for refusing to deny the divinity of the Son of God, as set forth in the Nicæan creed.[207] His tyranny respected civil liberty no more than liberty of conscience, and the Visigoth nobility no more than the conquered nations; he attacked by persecution, exile, and torture, all the most considerable persons in his kingdom.[208] Leander, describing the state of his country under the yoke of the persecutor, says, that a man truly free was no longer to be seen, and that, by a just judgment of God, the soil itself, taken from its lawful proprietors, had lost its former fertility.[209] The unnatural father ended by besieging his son in Seville. The young king, made prisoner after a long resistance, and obliged to receive the communion from the hands of an Arian bishop, preferred to die, and was slain in his prison, on Easter eve of the year 586.

Martyrdom of Hermenegild. 586.

The monasteries which already existed in Spain naturally suffered much in that war. In one of these, dedicated to St. Martin, and situated between Sagonte and Carthagena, the monks, on the approach of the royal army, abandoned their old abbot and took flight, with the intention of concealing themselves in an island of the sea. The Goths arrived, and sacked the defenceless monastery, where they found the abbot alone, bowed down by age, but *kept erect by virtue*, as says Gregory of Tours, to whom we owe the tale. One of them drew his sword to kill the abbot,

The monastery of St. Martin.

[207] Yepes attributes this martyrdom to a king of the Sueves, and places it in the year 554; but Mabillon agrees with Baronius in fixing the date 584, and under the reign of Leuvigild. Compare Act. SS. O. B., t. i. p. 287, and *Ann. Bened.*, lib. vii. c. 27.

[208] "Exstitit et quibusdam suarum perniciosus. Nam vi cupiditatis et livoris, quoscumque potentes ac nobiles vidit, aut capite damnavit, aut opibus ablatis proscripsit." — S. Isidori, *Chronic.*, era 608. The holy historian adds that he was the first among the Visigoth kings who affected to sit on a throne, and to wear a royal mantle. "Nam ante eum et habitus et consessus omnis ut genti, ita et regibus erat." — *Ibid.*

[209] "Ego expertus loquor, sic perdidisset statum et speciem illam patriam, ut nec liber quisquam circa supersit, nec terra ipsa solita sit ubertate fecunda, et non sine Dei judicio. Terra enim cui cives erepti sunt et concessa extraneo, mox ut dignitatem perdidit, caruit et feconditate." — S. Leandr., *De Instit. Virgin.*, c. ult.

but, as he was about to strike, fell back and died. At this sight the others fled. Leuvigild himself, when informed of the fact, was touched by it, and ordered the restitution of everything that had been taken from the monastery, thus saved by the courage and sanctity of the old abbot.[210]

It was during this struggle between father and son, which lasted several years, and before he was himself exiled, that Leander was sent by Hermenegild to Constantinople to claim the aid of the Byzantine emperors, who had still retained some possessions in Spain, with their garrisons. It was there that the monk-bishop, the envoy of a princely martyr to orthodoxy, met that other monk set apart for the highest destiny, and that one of these tender and strong friendships of which it is pleasant to find so many examples in the lives of the saints, was formed between Gregory and Leander. The brotherly entreaties of Leander induced the holy doctor to undertake the greatest of his works, the Commentary upon Job, which is also called the *Moralia* of St. Gregory. The intimate and lasting tenderness which united these two great men, and which continued through the premature infirmities of which both were victims,[211] shines through various portions of the correspondence of Gregory, and dictated to him those accents which breathe across so many intervening centuries the immortal perfume of real love. "Absent in the body," wrote the pope to his friend, "you are always present to my eyes, for I bear your lineaments graven on my heart. . . . You can read in your own heart what an ardent thirst I have to see you, for you love me sufficiently for that. . . . What a cruel distance separates us! I send you my books. Read them with care, and then weep over my sins, since I appear to know so well that which I do so ill. My letter is very short; it will show you how much I am overwhelmed by the business and storms of my Church since I write so briefly to him I love most in the world."[212] And later, "I have received your letter, written

Leander, exiled at Constantinople, meets St. Gregory there.

Their tender friendship.

[210] "Cum exercitus . . . ut assolet, graviter loca sancta concuteret. . . . Abbatem senio incurvatum sed sanctitate erectum." — Greg. Tur., *De Glor. Confess.*, c. 12.

[211] "De podagræ vero molestia Sanctitas Vestra . . . affligetur, cujus dolore assiduo et ipse vehementer attritus sum." — S. Greg. *Ep.*, ix. 121.

[212] "Quam absentem corpore, præsentem mihi te semper intueor, quia vultus tui imaginem intra cordis viscera impressam porto." — *Epist.*, i. 41. "Quanto ardore videre te sitiam, quia valde me diligis, in tui tabulis cordis leges . . . quando ei parum loquor quem magis omnibus diligo." — *Ib.*, v. 49.

with the pen of charity. It is in your heart that you have dipped your pen. The wise and worthy men who have heard it read, have been at once moved to the depth of their hearts. Each of them offered you the hand of love; they seemed not only to have heard you, but to see you with the gentleness of your soul. They were all inspired with admiration, and that flame lighted in your hearers demonstrated your own; for no man can light the sacred fire in others without being himself consumed by it." [213]

However, the excess of evil hastened its end, and the Church was about to attain a sudden and complete triumph. The tyrant Leuvigild, the parricide-king,[214] struck by a mortal sickness, was seized with remorse; upon his deathbed he ordained the recall of Leander, and gave him as a guide to his son and successor Recarede, recommending the latter to embrace the Catholic faith. The new king, who had been, like his brother, the pupil of Leander, hastened to obey. He became a Catholic immediately, and undertook the conversion of his people. After long controversies with the Arian clergy, he succeeded in overcoming all resistance, but by discussion, and not by force.[215] Four years after his accession to the throne, having confirmed his reign by brilliant victories over the Franks, he proclaimed, at the third Council of Toledo, the abjuration of Arianism by the united nation of Goths and Sueves. The king there declared that the illustrious nation of Goths, separated up to that time by the perversity of its doctors from the universal Church, returned to unity, and demanded to be instructed in orthodox Catholic doctrine. He placed in the hands of the bishops his profession of faith, written by his own hand, along with that of eight Arian bishops, of his nobility, and of all his people.

Conversion of Recarede and the Visigoth nation.

589.

Leander, in his capacity of pope's legate, naturally presided at this great assembly, in which sat seventy-eight bishops, and the deliberations of which were eminently assisted by another monk, Eutropius, abbot of that monastery

[213] "Solius charitatis calamo scriptam. Ex corde enim lingua tinxerat quod in chartæ pagina refundebat. . . . Nisi enim prius in se faces ardeant, alium non succendunt." — *Epist.*, ix. 121.

[214] "Pater vero perfidus et parricida." — S. Greg., *loc. cit.*

[215] "Sacerdotes sectæ Arianæ sapienti colloquio aggressus, ratione potius quam imperio converti ad Catholicam fidem facit, gentemque omnium Gothorum ac Suevorum ad unitatem et pacem revocat Ecclesiæ Christianæ." — Joannis *abbatis* Biclarensis *Chronic.*, ap. *Hispania Illustr.*, 1068, t. iv. p. 137.

of Servitanum, which was considered the most ancient in Spain.[216] A third monk, John, who had been exiled like Leander, and had consoled his exile by founding a great monastery under the rule of St. Benedict in Catalonia, recorded the great transformation of which he was witness in a chronicle by which the series of monastic historians was begun in Spain.[217]

Thus was accomplished in the Peninsula, under the auspices of a great pope and a great bishop, both monks and close friends, the triumph of that orthodoxy which found for ten centuries a true champion in the Spanish nation, where, even amid decay and downfall, its instinct and tradition are still preserved.

Connection of Recarede with Gregory.

Leander hastened to announce the triumph of truth, and the thorough conversion of the king, his nephew, to Gregory, who showed himself always affectionately interested in the new conquests of the Church. He recommended Leander to watch attentively over the soul of the prince, lest pride and impurity should come to stain his young orthodoxy. Recarede entered into direct correspondence with the pope; in order to render himself more agreeable to a pontiff, who had learnt in the cloister how to govern the Church, he took for his representatives abbots chosen with care from the Spanish monasteries,[218] to whom he intrusted the presents which he intended for Gregory. But they were shipwrecked and lost everything upon rocks near Marseilles. Recarede was not discouraged, and afterwards sent a golden chalice to the pope, with a letter in semi-barbarous Latin, but full of heart. He entreated the pope, who wrote to so many, to write to him also, and added, "Those who are divided by earth and sea, the grace of Jesus Christ seems often to attract to each other; those who have never seen you rejoice in your fame. Never forget to recommend us to God, I and my people, whom you have seen in your own time gained to Christ: the breadth of the world separates us, but may charity unite us!"[219] Like the

[216] "Summa tamen synodalis negotii penes sanctum Leandrum . . . et beatissimum Eutropium monasterii Servitani abbatem fuit." — JOANNIS *abbatis* BICLARENSIS *Chronic.*, ap. *Hispania Illustr.*, 1608, t. iv. p. 137.

[217] S. ISIDORI, *De Script. Eccl.*; MARIANA, *De Reb. Hispan.*, lib. v. c. 13. See the letter from the Bishop of Barcelona, respecting the site of this monastery of Biclara or Vilclara, in MABILLON, *Ann. Bened.*, lib. iii. c. 35.

[218] "Ex monasteriis abbates elegimus." — *Apud* S. GREG., *Epist.*, ix. 61.

[219] "Nonnunquam solet ut quos spatia terrarum sive maria dividunt, Christi gratia ceu visibiliter glutinare. . . . Nos gentesque nostras . . . quæ vestris

Frank kings, Recarede afterwards desired the good offices of the pope with the Byzantine court, in which all the barbarian princes always saw a reflection of ancient Roman grandeur. Gregory on his side responded to him with affection and in detail: he insisted upon the conditions of eternal salvation, warned him especially against temptations to pride and anger, and proved that the conversion of his people could not have a better guarantee than the humility of his soul and the purity of his life.[220] He sent this answer by his friend the abbot Cyriac, whom he calls the "father of our monastery,"[221] and whom he made his legate in Spain, confiding to him the care of proceeding against simony and the intrusion of laymen into the episcopate, as he had already done in France. He sent the pallium on the same occasion to Leander, who preceded his friend to the tomb by some years, dying at the same time as King Recarede in 601. Spain has always honored in him her doctor and apostle, the principal instrument of her return to Catholic unity.[222]

Leander and his monastic family.

All his family were associated in this work. His father and mother had been, like himself, exiled for the faith, and died in that exile. His brother Fulgentius, a bishop like himself, shared his combats and his victory. His sister Florentine, embracing monastic life, became the superior of forty convents and a thousand nuns, and by her knowledge, her virtue, and even by her sacred songs, was worthy of taking her place at the head of all the illustrious nuns whom the country of St. Theresa has given to the Church.[223] Leander, who loved her tenderly, wrote for her use a special rule.[224]

Rule given by Leander to his sister Florentine.

"I have considered," he says to her in the preamble of this rule, "dearest sister, what wealth or patrimony I could leave to thee; many fallacious things have occurred to my mind, which I have driven away as troublesome flies are brushed away by the hand. Of all that I have seen under the sun, there is nothing worthy of thee. It is above the skies that we must seek the true

sunt a Christi acquisita temporibus . . . ut . . . quos orbis latitudo dissociat . . . vera charitas convalescat."

[220] *Epist.*, ix. 122.

[221] "Monasterii nostri patrem." — *Ibid.*, ix. 120.

[222] "Adeo ut non immerito cum colant Hispani tanquam gentis suæ doctorem et apostolum, cui potissimum debet Hispania quod et rectam fidem et Catholicos habeat reges." — D'Achery, *Act. SS. O. B.*, t. i. p. 376.

[223] She died in 603.

[224] *De Institutione Virginum et Contemptu Mundi*, divided into twenty-one chapters.

wealth, the gift of holy virginity. . . . I am not capable, beloved sister, of extolling it enough. It is an ineffable and hidden gift. What all the saints hope one day to be, what the entire Church expects to become after the resurrection, you are already. . . . You are the fine flour of the body of the Church, and her purest leaven; you are the offering already accepted by God, and consecrated upon his celestial altars.[225] Christ is already thy spouse, thy father, thy friend, thy inheritance, thy ransom, thy Lord and thy God."

He warns her against all intimacy with lay women, whom he calls sirens and instruments of Satan.[226] He condemns the error of those who believe they could consecrate their virginity to God without shutting themselves up in a monastery, by remaining in their families or in isolated cells, in the midst of cities, among all the cares of domestic life.[227] He affirms that regular monastic life is identically conformed to that which was led by the Apostles. He reminds that daughter of a noble race, that sister and aunt of Visigoth kings, of the obligations imposed upon her by Christian equality, and directs her to regard as her equals even the slaves who, like her, had assumed the veil. "Their birth made them slaves, their profession has made them thy sisters. Let nothing remind them of their ancient servitude. She who combats by thy side for Christ under the banner of virginity should enjoy a liberty equal to thine. In accepting them for thy sisters, thou shalt have them so much the more for servants, that they will obey thee not by the obligation of servitude, but by the freedom of charity. Not that your humility should tempt them to pride. Charity tempers everything, and will conduct you all to the frontier of the same peace, without exalting her who has sacrificed power, and without humiliating her who was born poor or enslaved."[228] It is pleasant to find in that great mind the indications of fraternal affection and domestic recollections. "Seek not," said he, playing upon the name of their mother Turtur, who had also ended her days in the cloister, "to steal away from the roof where the turtle lays her little ones. Thou art the daughter of innocence and candor, thou who hast had the turtle-dove for thy mother. But love still more

[225] "Perquirenti mihi, soror carissima, . . . multæ rerum fallacium occurrebant imagines, quas cum ut importunas muscas manu mentis abigerem. . . . Vos estis prima delibatio corporis Ecclesiæ: vos ex tota corporis massa oblationes." — *Præf. Regul.*

[226] *Cap.* 1.

[227] *Cap.* 17.

[228] *Cap.* 12 and 13.

the Church, that other mystic turtle-dove, who travails with thee every day for Jesus Christ. Repose thy old age on her bosom, as thou sleptst of old upon the heart of her who cared for thy infancy.[229] . . . Ah, well-beloved sister, understand the ardent desire which inspires the heart of thy brother to see thee with Christ. . . . Thou art the better part of myself. Woe to me if another take thy crown! Thou art my bulwark with Christ, my cherished pledge, my holy Host, through whom I shall be worthy to issue out of the abyss of my sins."[230]

Florentine had yet another brother younger, but not less illustrious than Leander, who loved her as much, since he has dedicated to her one of the greatest monuments of his genius.[231] Isidore was the last born of that high-destined family. Before succeeding Leander upon the metropolitan see of Seville, he was the pupil of his elder brother, who loved him like a son, but who used him with so much severity that the young Isidore, fearing the energetic and frequent corrections of his brother,[232] fled one day from the school at Seville. After having wandered for some time through the country exhausted by thirst and fatigue, the child seated himself near a well, and looked with curiosity at the hollows worn in its edge. He asked himself who had done that, when a woman who came to draw water from the well, and who was greatly struck with the beauty and humble innocence of the scholar, explained to him that the drops of water falling incessantly on the same spot had hollowed the stone. Then the child returned into himself, and thought, that if the hard stone was hollowed thus drop by drop by the water, his mind would also yield to the print of instruction.[233] He returned accordingly to his brother, and completed his education so well, that he was shortly master of Latin, Greek,

His brother Isidore.

[229] "Simplicitatis filia es quæ turture matre nata es. Turturem pro matre respice. Turturem pro magistra attende, et quæ te Christo quotidie affectibus generat, chariorem qua nata es matrem reputa . . . sit tibi dulce ejus gremium provectæ quod erat infantis gratissimum." — *Cap.* 21.

[230] "Senti fratris concupiscentiam velle te esse cum Christo. . . . Tu quæ pars melior nostri es corporis. . . . Tu apud Christum tutamen meum, tu, charissima, meum pignus." — *Præfat.*

[231] His treatise *De Fide Catholica.*

[232] "Non parcebat virgis, et laudatus est in illo. . . . Puerili permotus timore, verbera magistri metuens." — Lucas Tudensis, *Vit. S. Isid.*, ap. Bolland., t. i. *Apr.*, p. 331.

[233] "Aspexit prægrande saxum tortuosis foraminibus perforatum. . . . Mulier super pulchritudine pueri admodum mirata. . . . Quis vel ad quid lapidis hujus foramina. . . . Et si lapis durissimus mollis aquæ frequenti instillatione cavatur, quanto magis ego homo!" — *Ibid.*

and Hebrew, and became the active fellow-laborer of Leander in the work of Arian conversion.

Action of Isidore upon the order in Spain.

He lived long in a cell where his brother kept him shut up to prevent him from wandering, giving him the most learned masters of the time. It is not absolutely proved that he was a monk, though many have maintained it. But it is difficult to doubt it when we read the Rule which he wrote, in twenty-three chapters, for the use of the Religious of his own country, and which is little more than an extract of the Benedictine Rule, with which his brother Leander had made him familiar.

His monastic writings.

Curious details upon the means by which the order recruited its ranks from the most various classes, and the lowest conditions of life, are to be found here, as in another of his works upon the *Duty of the Monks*. This information is communicated to us in wise and noble words, which breathe, with more precision and eloquence than anywhere else, the doctrine of the equality of souls before God and the Church, but where we also perceive the curb imposed by justice and reason on the pride of the newly emancipated. "Our holy army," says Isidore, "fills up its ranks not only with freemen, but especially with those of servile condition, who come to seek freedom in the cloister. Men come also from rustic life, from laborious professions, from plebeian labors, and with so much more advantage as they are better inured to labor. It would be a serious fault not to admit them." "We must not inquire," he adds, "whether the novice be rich or poor, bond or free, young or old; neither age nor condition matters among monks; for God has made no difference between the soul of the slave and that of the free man. . . . Many plebeians have exhibited brilliant virtues, and are worthy to be raised above nobles. . . . But let not those who come out of poverty to enter the cloister swell with pride to see themselves the equals of those who appeared to be something in the world. It would be an unworthy thing if, where the rich, giving up all worldly splendor, descend to humility, the poor should allow themselves to rise into arrogance. . . . They ought, on the contrary, to put aside all vanity, to understand humbly their new position, and never to forget their former poverty."[234]

Equality in the cloister.

[234] "Veniunt non solum liberi, sed plerumque ex conditione servili vel propter hoc potius liberandi. Veniunt quoque ex vita rustica, et ex opificum exercitatione, . . . et ex plebeio labore, tanto utique felicius, quanto fortius

Monk or not, Isidore distinguished himself by his zeal for monastic interests when on the death of Leander he became bishop of Seville, and the oracle of the Spanish Church.[235] He presided at that Council of Seville which, in 619, pronounced the anathema against bishops or priests who should attempt to disturb or despoil the monasteries.[236]

Services rendered by him to the Church and to Spain.

During the forty years of his episcopate, his knowledge, zeal, and authority consolidated the happy revolution and religious and literary revival of which his brother had been the chief author. He completed the destruction of Arianism, stifled the new heresy of the *Acephales*, continued, strengthened, and enriched the vast educational work of which Seville was the centre, and which, by means of the fourth Council of Toledo, he extended to all the Episcopal Churches of Spain, prescribing everywhere the study of Greek and Hebrew. He was, besides, the compiler of that Spanish liturgy so poetic and imposing, which, under the name of Mozarabic, survived the ruin of the Visigoth Church, and was worthy of being resuscitated by the great Ximenes.

A fertile writer, unwearied and profoundly learned, he wrote, among many other works, a history of the Goths, their conquests and government in Spain. He made Aristotle known to the new nations of the West long before the Arabs came to bring him again into fashion. He has preserved to us a multitude of classical fragments which without his care would have perished forever, by condensing all the knowledge of antiquity and of his own time, the seven liberal arts, philological tradition, medicine, law, natural history, geography, and even the mechanical arts, in that vast encyclopedia which, under the name of a treatise on *Etymology* or on *The Origin of Things*, was, with the analogous work of the monk Cassiodorus, the school manual of the middle ages.[237] It has been said of him with justice that he was the last philosopher

educati." — S. Isidori, *De Offic. Eccles.*, c. 15; *De Monach.*, c. 5. "Quia inter servi et liberi animam nulla est apud Deum differentia. . . . Non extollantur in superbiam, quia se ibi æquales aspiciunt iis qui aliquid in sæculo videbantur." — *Regula*, c. 4. Finally Isidore prohibited, in his rule, the reception into the monastery of slaves whom their masters had not set free.

[235] Compare Bolland., loc. c., and Mabillon, *Act. SS. O. B. sæc.* ii. *in Prætermissis.* "Monastici quoque instituti per Hispaniam promotor, et amplificator eximius, plura construxit monasteria." — *Offic. Sanctorum in Brev. Rom. ad usum Hispaniæ.* Matr. 1678, die 4 April.

[236] *Can.* x.; ap. Coletti, *Concil.*, t. v. p. 1407.

[237] Ozanam, *La Civilisation Chrétienne chez les Francs*, c. 9.

of the ancient world[238] and the first Christian who arranged for Christians the knowledge of antiquity.

He dies. 636.

Isidore died in 636; but the light which he had thrown in floods upon Spain and the Church was not extinguished with him. He had numerous disciples, of whom St. Ildefonso was the most illustrious, but among whom we must name, in passing, Braulius, bishop of Saragossa, who has been characterized as the most eloquent writer of Gothic Spain; and King Sisebut, a learned prince, who had a double merit, according to a Benedictine historian, in his love for literature, as being at once a king and a Goth.[239]

St. Braulius.

Most of the Visigoth kings distinguished themselves by their liberality towards monasteries. The only authentic charter which remains of the Visigothic period, is a donation made in 646, by King Chindaswinde, to the monastery of Compludo. This charter is signed by the king, by the queen Reciberga, by St. Eugene, archbishop of Toledo, and two other bishops, by five counts, and four abbots, among whom we remark the name of Ildefonso, destined to the highest honor.[240] But the great number of similar donations is proved by the general and official formula on which these acts were modelled, and which French erudition has lately brought to light. The king who would found or endow a community addressed himself to the saint whose relics were to be placed in the new church, and spoke a language which seems to make even these legal forms palpitate with the ardent breath of Spanish faith. "Glorious lord and happy conqueror," he is made to say, "we have decreed that henceforth, in the place where the treasure of your sacred body reposes, there should be a congregation of monks, destined to serve God and honor your memory, according to the custom of the Fathers, who have established the rule of monastic life. We offer to your glorious memory such and such a portion of our patrimony to support the church and its light, its incense and its sacrifices, to supply the regulated food and clothing of the monks, the help of the poor, and that travellers may be received there. . . . We will that this donation, made to efface our sins, should be

Visigothic form for monastic founda-, tions.

[238] CUVIER.

[239] "Lo que es mucho para aquello tiempo que siendo Rey et Godo, se aplicava las letras." — YEPES, *Cent. Secund.*, p. 48.

[240] YEPES, *Coronica General del Orden de S. Benoît*, vol. ii. p. 174, and *Append., Esritura* 13.

perpetual; that neither priest nor prelate may have power to alienate it. We warn future abbots, in centuries to come, not to dissolve, by carelessness or irregularity, the bond which we here form. And you who shall reign after us, we adjure you by the empire of the eternal God (and may God deign to preserve the nation and kingdom of the Goths to the end of the world!) take heed that nothing is taken away or mutilated in these oblations, by which we would propitiate God for our own salvation, and that of all the Goths! Glorious martyr, accept this gift, and present it before God." [241] In this formula, as in the charter of Compludo, appear already those formidable imprecations so universal during the middle ages, against the violators and robbers of holy things which threaten them with the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, and which assign them a place in hell beside Dathan, Abiram, and Judas Iscariot.

The development of the monastic institution kept pace with that of literature and Christian piety, under the influence of the great doctors produced by monastic life in Spain. St. Ildefonso, who signed the charter of Compludo, in whom Leander and Isidore seemed to live again, and who was the most popular of the Spanish saints, issued like them from the famous school of Seville: but he was also connected with another centre of knowledge and ecclesiastical education created by the monastic spirit. At the gates of Toledo, which, since the union of the whole territory of Spain under the sceptre of the Visigoth kings, had replaced Seville as the capital of the Visigoth kingdom, rose the monastery of Agali, founded in the sixth century. In the following age, it was a nursery of saints and doctors, and the most celebrated abbey of the Peninsula. Six metropolitan bishops of Toledo [242] came from it in succession, and among them Helladius, a young lord of

School of Toledo.

Abbey of Agali.

[241] "*Formula quam facit rex qui Ecclesiam ædificans monasterium facere voluerit.* — Domino glorioso et triumphatori beatissimo. . . . Juxta Patrum more (*sic*) qui monachis normam vitæ posuerunt. . . . Per ætates succiduas futuros præmonemus abbates. . . . Per æterni regis imperium (sic Deus Gothorum gentem et regnum usque in finem sæculi conservare dignetur!) . . ." — E. DE ROZIÈRE, *Formules Visigothiques Inédites*, No. 9, 1854.

[242] Aurasius, died in 614; Helladius, died in 632; St. Just, who presided with St. Isidore at the fourth Council of Toledo, died in 635; Eugène II., a monk from infancy, presided at the fifth, sixth, and seventh Councils of Toledo, and died in 646; Eugène III., who was the most distinguished poet of Gothic Spain (v. BOURRET, *op. citat.*) presided at the eighth, ninth, and tenth Councils of Toledo, and died in 658; lastly, Ildefonso, nephew of the preceding, died in 667. The three first and Ildefonso were not only monks, but abbots of Agali.

the first nobility, the friend and fellow-student of Leander, who, like him, early renounced the world, and had lived long at Agali, in companionship with the Religious, and was pleased to be employed in carrying fagots to the abbatial oven,[243] before he himself became a monk. When he became bishop after having been abbot of the monastery, he instituted the great school which his successors vied with each other in developing.

St. Ildefonso, monk of Agali, bishop of Toledo.

Ildefonso, born at Toledo, of a family allied to the blood royal, received at first in Seville, for twelve years, the instructions of Isidore, and then, returning to his own birthplace, despite the violent opposition of his family, became a monk at Agali. Another kind of violence, that of the unanimous voice of the people and clergy of Toledo, was needed to draw him from thence, and place him upon the metropolitan see. He too cultivated history and poetry with success; his ascetic writings take an honorable place in the religious literature of the time. But it was his ardent devotion to the holy Virgin, whose perpetual virginity he defended against the heresy of the Helvidians, which gained him the first place in the love and memory of the Spanish people. The miraculous visions which testified the gratitude of Mary for the efforts of his defending zeal,[244] and the relics of them which he left to the church of Toledo, after having warmed the devotion of the Spaniards for their great saint *Alonzo*, received, a thousand years after his death, a new consecration from the genius of Calderon.[245]

The most popular of Spanish saints.

Leander, Isidore, and Ildefonso were the illustrious representatives of intellectual life in a time from which it had almost everywhere disappeared. These laborious, learned, and eloquent ecclesiastics, full of zeal for knowledge and study, as well as for religion, secured in Spain the future existence of Christian literature and literary traditions, which

[243] S. Hildephons., *De Virib. Illustr.*, c. 7.

[244] During the night of the feast of the *Expectatio Partus B. M. V.*, St. Leocadia, whose relics he had discovered, appeared to him and said, "O Ildefonse! per te vivit Domina mea, quæ cœli culmina tenet." In order to secure a palpable token of this vision, he seized the sword of King Receswinth, who accompanied him, and cut off a portion of the veil of the saint, which afterwards became a much venerated relic. — *Breviar. Roman. in prop. Cleri Romani, ad* 23 *Januar.* Another night, he saw the holy Virgin herself seated on the episcopal throne, in the apse of his cathedral, which was illuminated by that presence, and on which he never afterwards ventured to seat himself.

[245] See the drama, by Calderon, entitled *La Virgen del Sacrario.*

were everywhere else interrupted, or threatened by the storms of invasion, and the establishment of the Barbarians. They made their country the intellectual light of the Christian world in the seventh century.

After them come all the admirable bishops and monks, issued from the blood or spiritual family of these three great men, who were, as they themselves had been, the soul of the famous Councils of Toledo. It is well known that these councils were the strength and glory of Gothic Spain; and that out of their bosom came, purified by the sacerdotal spirit, that Visigothic legislation which modern knowledge has nobly vindicated,[246] and placed in the first rank of the laws of ancient Christendom, for the boldness, depth, and equity of its views.

The Councils of Toledo and their canons.

Leander and Isidore, the two illustrious brothers, gave to these assemblies the political and legislative character which they retained for a century, and which has fixed upon them the special attention of historians.[247] Doubtless, in the

[246] Guizot, *Hist. de la Civilisation*, vol. i.; *Hist. des Origines du Gouvernement Représentatif*, leç. 25; and *Revue Française* of November 1828.

[247] The following is the chronological list of the Councils which were held at Toledo from the conversion of the Visigoths to the conquest of Spain by the Moors. (Those numbered First and Second are previous, and date, the first 400, and the second 531.)

The Third, in 589, composed of 65 bishops, presided over by Leander, published 23 decrees or canons.

Two Councils, held in 597 and 610, the decrees of which were first published by Garcia Loasia in the sixteenth century, have not been comprised in the ordinary numeration, so as not to disarrange the traditional order.

The Fourth, in 633: 62 bishops; 75 canons. St. Isidore signs first.

The Fifth, in 636: 20 bishops; 9 canons.

The Sixth, in 638: 52 bishops; 19 canons.

The Seventh, in 646: 28 bishops; 6 canons.

The Eighth, in 653: 52 bishops; 10 abbots, among whom was Ildefonso, abbot of Agali; 12 canons.

The Ninth, in 655: 16 bishops; 6 abbots, among them Ildefonso; 17 canons.

The Tenth, in 656: 20 bishops, among them the monk St. Fructueux, archbishop of Braga, of whom we shall speak hereafter; 7 canons.

The Eleventh, in 675: 19 bishops; 6 abbots; 16 canons.

The Twelfth, in 681: 35 bishops; 4 abbots; 13 canons.

The Thirteenth, in 683: 48 bishops; 5 abbots; 13 canons.

The Fourteenth, in 684: 17 bishops; 6 abbots; 12 canons.

The Fifteenth, in 688: 61 bishops; 8 abbots.

The Sixteenth, in 693: 59 bishops; 5 abbots; 13 canons.

The Seventeenth, in 694: 8 canons; no signatures.

The Eighteenth, and last: in 701.

Many of these bishops proceeded from the monastic order, or ended their days in it. — Yepes, *Cent. Secund.* This collection includes, besides, the signatures of proxies of absent bishops, and those of a crowd of counts and lay *proceres*.

eighteen assemblies held at Toledo, from the conversion of the Visigoths to the conquest of Spain by the Moors, religious matters always occupied the first place. Questions touching doctrine, ecclesiastical hierarchy, and discipline, the independence and regularity of monasteries,[248] the general and detailed aspect of spiritual interests, formed the subject of most of the decisions issued by these Councils. Doubtless, also, the bishops played a preponderating part, by number as by authority. But lords and law dignitaries figured there also: entering the first time with the king, who almost always took the initiative as regards questions which were to be dealt with, these laymen withdrew with him; but after having left the bishops three days to discuss spiritual affairs alone, they returned to take part in the final deliberations. They were there by virtue of a recognized right: they signed the decrees like the bishops. Besides, the consent of what was then called the people — that is, of all the military nobility of the Gothic nation — seems to have been often asked and expressed to give validity to the decisions of the king, the bishops, and the *proceres*.[249]

Preponderating part of the bishops, but salutary intervention of laymen.

Thus constituted, these memorable assemblies exercised power, spiritual and temporal, political and civil, legislative and judiciary, in all its fulness: all the great affairs of the kingdom were discussed there; and this kingdom embraced not only the whole of Spain, which the Visigoths had succeeded in purging from the last vestiges of Greco-Roman power, but also the Narbonnaise, the bishops of which took their places at Toledo with those of the Peninsula. They made laws and kings. They regulated the conditions of the elective monarchy, too often ignored in practice by the sanguinary violence of pretenders, or of successors designated to the throne. And although the accomplished acts which they found it best to sanction had too often substituted violence for right, they

Decrees and doctrines on the subject of the Crown.

[248] The Fourth, held in 633, under the presidency of Isidore, showed itself especially zealous for the liberty of the monks, guaranteeing to priests the liberty of embracing monastic life, interdicting bishops from all molestation or usurpation injurious to the monasteries, and prohibiting the return to the world of all *professed* monks.

The Ninth, held in 655, saw the necessity of putting a curb on the munificence of bishops towards monasteries, by prohibiting them from disposing of more than a fiftieth of the episcopal patrimony in favor of these foundations.

[249] See Councils Eighth, Fourteenth, Sixteenth, but especially the canon of the Fourth, in 633, which renders valid the deposition of Swinthila, *after having taken the advice of the nation.*

always condemned in principle every candidate whose claims were not founded on an election by the nobility and clergy, upon the purity of his Gothic origin, and the uprightness of his character.[250]

After having established that the king was only the representative and delegate of the people, they seem to have accorded to him a kind of counter-advantage, by attributing to his authority a fulness which contrasts with the limitations imposed upon their princes by the traditional freedom of the Germanic races, who were best acquainted with the means of recognizing at once the rights of blood, and restraining the exercise of power. But never, it must be acknowledged, has the sovereign power been addressed in language more noble than that of the fourth Council of Toledo, speaking by the mouth of Isidore and his colleagues to King Sisenand and his successors. "You who are actually king, and all you, the princes of the future, we humbly adjure you to be gentle and moderate towards your subjects, to govern with justice and piety the nations which God has confided to you, and thus to pay your debt to Christ who has made you kings. Let none among you decide by himself in causes which concern life or property, but let the crime of the accused be proved in a public sitting with the chiefs of the people, and by an open judgment. Be gentle even in your severity: by means of such moderation the kings will be content with the people, the people with the kings, and God with both. As for the future kings, this is the sentence we publish concernning them. If any one among them, in opposition to the laws, for pride or royal pomp, or covetousness, oppresses or vexes his people, may he be accursed by the Lord Christ, and forever separated from God!"[251]

But the kings, who listened humbly to such lessons, practised them little. The councils were not the less obliged to interfere energetically in order to repress the rapacity of the kings and the subaltern insolence of certain officers drawn by

[250] "Defuncto in pace principe, primates totius gentis cum sacerdotibus successorem regni communi concilio constituant." — *Conc.* iv. *can.* 74. "Quem nec electio omnium provehit, nec Gothicæ gentis nobilitas ad hunc honoris apicem trahit, sit . . . anathemati condemnatus." — *Conc.* v. *can.* 3. "Nullus sub religionis habitu detonsus . . . servilem originem trahens, vel extraneæ gentis homo nisi genere et moribus dignus." — *Conc.* xvi. *can.* 17.

[251] "To quoque præsentem regem futurosque sequentium ætatum principes. . . . Ne quisquam vestrum solus in caussis capitum aut rerum sententiam ferat, sed consensu publico cum rectoribus. . . . Si quis ex eis contra reverentiam legum superba dominatione et fastu regio . . . crudelissimam potestatem in populo exercuerit." — *Conc.* iv. *can.* 75.

them from the servile classes. "When," said the Fathers of the eighth council, held in 653, at which the monk Eugenius presided as bishop of Toledo, and where Ildefonso already sat as abbot of Agali, "when in time past the frightful avidity of the princes has thrown itself upon the goods of the people, and wildly sought to increase its wealth by the tears of its subjects, we have been inspired by a breath from on high, after having granted to the subjects laws of respectful obedience, to put a check also upon the excesses of the princes." [252] And the Fathers of the thirteenth council, in 683, decreed as follows: "We know that many slaves and freedmen, raised by order of the king to palatine offices, and affecting to arrogate to themselves a power which the baseness of their origin interdicts, having become by their new dignity the equals of their lords, have made themselves the murderers of their former masters, even of those who gave them their freedom. Therefore, from this time, we debar any serf or freedman (except those of the treasury) from admission into a palatine office." [253]

Unhappily, the efforts of these assemblies to restrain the excesses of the princes and their servants lacked, like those of the nobles and clergy, a lasting guarantee and sanction. The Goths of Spain, permitting the Roman spirit and manners to gain too rapid a sway over them, gradually lost the traditions of Germanic institutions and liberties. Unaccustomed to those assemblies of free men and that practise of military virtue which were always kept up among the Franks, they knew no way of establishing the necessary counterpoise to the violence of the kings, which ended by overthrowing the monarchy of the Visigoths under the sword of the Arabs.

Severities against the Jews.

We can still recognize in their ceaseless but always impotent decrees against the Jews, whom they baptized by force, and furiously pursued even into private and domestic life, that implacable character of Spanish religion, which, two centuries before, had disgusted the great soul of St. Martin against the persecutors of the Priscillianists,[254] and which has almost always failed of its aim by exceeding it, as is proved by the important part, more impor-

[252] "Cum immoderatior aviditas principum sese prona diffunderet in spoliis populorum . . . nobis est divinitus inspiratum ut, quia subjectis leges reverentiæ dederamus, principum quoque excessus retinaculum temperantiæ poneremus." — *Concil.* viii., ap. COLETTI, t. viii. p. 428.

[253] *Concil.*, iii. *Tolet.*, can. 6, ap. COLETTI, t. vii. 1471.

[254] See above, p. 268.

tant here than anywhere else, played by Jews, and even by Jewesses, in the history of the middle ages in Spain. By a deplorable inconsistency, these pitiless measures had been preceded by the example of the persuasions employed unaided by King Recarede in the conversion of the Arian priests,[255] by the formal censure of St. Isidore against the proselytizing fanaticism of the Visigoth kings, and by that deliverance of the Council of 633, which breathes the intelligent toleration of victorious Christianity: "None can be saved who do not desire it. As man fell by listening of his own will to the serpent, so, upon the call of divine grace, man is saved, and believes only by the voluntary conversion of his own soul. It is not by force but by free will that they can be persuaded to conversion." [256]

It is well known, besides, that most of the laws passed by the Council of Toledo concerning political affairs are embodied in that celebrated code, which, under the name of *Liber* or *Forum Judicum* (in the Castilian language, *Fuero Juezgo*), is the principal basis of Spanish legislation, and one of the most curious monuments of the legislative history of Christian nations. St. Isidore is believed to have been the first compiler of this record, in which the kings and bishops successively entered, along with the decrees of the councils, the ancient Gothic customs, and some fragments of Roman law.[257] It was reviewed and arranged by order of King Egica in the sixteenth Council of Toledo, in 693. This code survived Gothic Spain; through all the wretchedness of the Arab conquest, and the heroic struggle of the Spanish race against Islamism, its spirit continued to animate the princes and assemblies, and its luminous trace through history has always aided Spanish patriotism in recalling its Christian origin.

The *Fuero Juezgo* first made out by St. Isidore.

The influence of the clergy is visible in the didactic style of its language, and still more in the general spirit of equity

[255] See above, p. 417.

[256] "De Judæis hoc præcepit sancta synodus: nemini deinceps ad credendum vim inferre. . . . Non enim tales inviti salvandi sunt, sed volentes: sicut enim homo, etc. . . . Ergo non vi, sed libera arbitrii facultate, ut convertantur suadendi sunt, non potius impellendi." — *Concil. Toletan.* iv., can. 57. But immediately after, it must be confessed, it is added that those who had been forced to become Christians in the time of King Sisebut should be obliged to remain such, for this very doubtful reason: "Oportet ut fidem etiam, quam vi et necessitate susceperunt, tenere cogantur, ne nomen deviuum blasphemetur, et fides quam susceperunt vilis ac contemptibilis habeatur!"

[257] Arevalo, *Isidoriana*, c. 92.

which has dictated its principal regulations, in the guarantees granted to slaves, but especially in the penalties, which, different from all other Barbarian codes, attempt to proportion punishment, not to the material injury done or to the rank of the culprit, but to the morality of the act.[258] The fusion of the two races, conquering and conquered, is also made apparent by the absence of all those distinctions of right or penalty which, in the laws of other Germanic nations, marked the different origin of races which inhabited the same country. There is good reason for regretting that this celebrated code was written during an age in which the primitive genius of the Goths was weakened, and in which Roman civilization had too much effaced the strong individuality of Germanic institutions and national customs.[259] But the old law of the Germans may yet be found in the theory of royal rights, which recognizes no other legitimate title of power than that which results from the morality and justice of its possessors. We shall see that theory retain all its force amid the great struggles between the priesthood and the empire, and shall hear, even in the times of Gregory VII., the voice of the bishops and monks apply against the emperors that axiom which the Visigothic code had set forth so energetically: "*Rex eris, si recte facis: si autem non facis, rex non eris.*"

King Wamba made a monk in spite of himself.

In 680 the bishops made a singular use of this right of deposition, in the case of the old King Wamba, who, after a glorious reign, being sick and poisoned by a Greek, had received the monastic habit and tonsure from the hands of the archbishop while he was supposed to be in extremity, according to a pious custom of the time, habitual to those who desired to make a public repentance before dying. When he came to himself he thought himself obliged to ratify the vow which he had appeared to make,[260] and named as his successor Count Erwige, the son of the man who had poisoned him. He entered into a monastery, and lived there seven years, in holy obedience to his new duties; in the mean time, the bishops, met in the twelfth Council of Toledo, relieved his subjects from their oaths of fidelity, and anathematized the enemies of the new king. They afterwards decreed a canon

[258] Albert Du Boys, *Histoire du Droit Criminel des Peuples Européens.*
[259] E. de Rozière, *Formules Visigothiques*, Introd.
[260] "Sive," says Mariana (*De Reb. Hisp.*, vi. 14), "animi magnitudine rursus spernentis, quæ alii per ignes ferrumque petunt; sive desperatione regnum recuperandi, cum Erwigius rerum potiretur."

which took into consideration the case of those who, having desired the *penitence* (that is, the tonsure and monastic habit) while they were in good health, and having received it without asking it during their illness, were desirous of returning to military life under pretence that they could not be bound by a vow which they had not made; their return is formally interdicted, because they are regarded as pledged, like children who have received baptism without being conscious of it. But the same canon forbids bishops to give the penitence to those who do not ask it, under pain of a year's excommunication.[261] Everything is obscure and strange in this history, which, nevertheless, is too closely connected with monastic annals to be passed in silence. This, however, was not the first time that kings had been obliged to become monks in Spain; a century before, one of the last kings of the Sueves had been made a monk against his will by a usurper: and the latter had been immediately after attacked and overcome by Leovigild, who forced him, in his turn, to enter the cloister, and added the kingdom of the Sueves to that of the Visigoths. But Leovigild was an Arian persecutor, and an orthodox council might have found better examples.[262]

St. Fructuosus, monastic apostle of the Sueves, and of Lusitania.

In this very country of the Sueves, during the greater part of the seventh century, the true monastic spirit shed all its lustre in the person of St. Fructuosus. "God created at this time," says a contemporary monk, "two great suns to light these western shores with the rays of that flaming truth which shone from the Apostolic See: the one, Isidore of Seville, relighted among us, by his eloquence, his writings, his wisdom, and active industry, the great light of dogmatic truth issued by the supreme chair of Rome; the other, Fructuosus, by the immaculate innocence of his life, by the spiritual fire of his contemplations, made the virtues of the first Fathers of the desert, and the prodigies of the Thebaid, shine into our hearts."[263] Issued from the blood royal, and son of a gen-

[261] Can. 2.

[262] If a French historian is to be believed, another king of the Goths, the young Tolga, after two years' reign, was deposed by an insurrection of the nobility, in 642, and forced to become a monk. "Tolganam degradatum ad honorem clericati fecit." — FREDEGAR, c. 82.

[263] "Postquam . . . a Sede Romana, prima S. Ecclesiæ Cathedra, fidei catholicæ dogmatum fulgurans rutilaret immensitas . . . atque ex Ægypto . . . hujus occiduæ plagæ exigua perluceret extremitas. . . . Divina pietas duas inluminavit lucernas, etc." — *Vit. S. Fructuosi, auct.* S. VALERIO, *abb.*, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., *sæc.* ii. p. 557.

eral of the Gothic army, the young Fructuosus, when taken by his father into one of his estates upon the frontiers of Galicia to take account of his flocks, secretly noted in his soul a site for a future monastery in that wild country. His parents being dead, he withdrew, after having studied humane and sacred literature at Palencia, into the desert which he had chosen as a child, and built a monastery, which he endowed with all he had, and where he was shortly joined by a numerous band of monks.[264] But he himself, flying from the renown of his virtue, took refuge in the woods and most precipitous rocks, that he might be forgotten by all. One day while praying in a secluded spot in a forest, a laborer who passed by took him for a fugitive slave, questioned him, and, dissatisfied with his answers, overwhelmed him with blows, and led him by a rope round his neck to a place where he was recognized.[265] Another time, like St. Benedict, he was taken for a wild beast. A hunter, seeing him covered merely with a goat-skin, and prostrated upon the summit of a rock, had aimed an arrow at him, when he perceived, by seeing him lift his hands to heaven, that it was a man occupied in prayer.[266]

St. Fructuosus and his doe.

On another occasion, a hind, pursued by the huntsman and almost hunted down, threw herself into the folds of the solitary's tunic. He saved her and took her with him to the monastery; and the story runs that the monk and the wild creature loved each other tenderly. The hind followed him everywhere, slept at the foot of his bed, and bleated incessantly when he was absent. He sent her back more than once into the wood; but she always again found the road to his cell, or the footsteps of her liberator. One day at last she was killed by a young man who had no goodwill to the monks. Fructuosus was absent some days on a journey; on his return he was astonished not to see his hind running to meet him, and when he heard of her death, he was seized with grief, his knees trembled under him, and he threw himself upon the floor of the church. Whether he did this to ask of God the punishment of the cruel man, is not told, but the latter fell sick soon after, and begged the

[264] That of Compludo (in the diocese of Astorga), which has been discussed before, on occasion of the charter of King Cyndaswynde, in 646.

[265] "Lo traia con un garrote." — YEPES, p. 175.

[266] "Loca nemorosa, argis densissima, aspera et fragosa . . . capreis pellibus indutus. In cujusdam rupis gradibus . . . quidam arcistes . . . cum librasset ictum ut dimitteret sagittam." — YEPES, c. 4.

abbot to come to his aid. Fructuosus avenged himself nobly, and like a Christian: he went to heal the murderer of his hind, and restored him to health of soul as well as to health of body.[267]

It is pleasant to see such gracious and innocent tenderness in times so rude, as well as in those strong souls, born to reign and draw nations after their footsteps. The example of the young Gothic noble, whom love of penitence had driven into solitude, became so contagious that he had to build other monasteries to receive the immense choir of converts who pressed upon his steps.[268] The number became so great, that the duke of one of the provinces wrote to the king to warn him that if some obstacle was not interposed, the country would be so entirely depopulated, that there would remain nobody to fill up the ranks of the army. The women imitated the men; Fructuosus received one day a letter from a young girl of noble family, named Benedicta, betrothed to a *garding* — that is, to one of the principal officers of the Visigothic court — telling him that she had escaped from her father's house, that she was wandering in the woods not far from the monastery, and begging him to have pity on her as upon a sheep which he must snatch from the fangs of the wolf. He received her, and built for her a little cell in the forest, which shortly became the centre of a community of eighty nuns, where mothers often came with their daughters to consecrate themselves to God. The *garding* endeavored in vain to recover his betrothed: he compelled the superior of the new monastery to bring to him her who had fled from him: she came, but refused to look at him, and he remained mute in her presence. Then the royal judge said, "Leave her to serve the Lord, and find for yourself another wife."[269]

The betrothed bride of a *garding* received by Fructuosus.

We cannot record all the marvellous incidents in the life of the monastic patriarch of Lusitania. We can only say that his austerities and endless journeys did not prevent him from

[267] "Victa bestiola . . . sub viri Dei amphibalum ingressa est . . . si vel paululum ab ea recederet, nunquam balare cessaret, quousque ad eam denuo rediret . . . in lectulum ad pedes ejus recubaret. . . . Sanctissimus vir ad monasterium regressus, sollicite requisivit quidnam causæ esset cur caprea sua ei solito more tunc minime occurreret. . . . Qui mox genua sua summo cum dolore flectens." — YEPES, c. 10.

[268] "Ut catervatim undique concurrentium agmina conversorum immensus fieret chorus." — *Ibid.*, c. 15.

[269] "De præsentia regis levavit judicem, qui inter eos examinaret judicii veritatem, comitem Angelate . . . Dimitte eam Domino servire, et quære tibi aliam uxorem." — YEPES, c. 17.

cultivating literature, from recommending its study to his monks, nor even from giving himself to poetry; for some of his verses are still extant.[270] In the regulations which he composed for his different houses, we find that they kept great flocks of sheep, the profit of which furnished them with means for the assistance of the poor, for redeeming captives, and exercising hospitality. One monk was specially charged with the superintendence of the shepherds.

He is made Archbishop of Braga. 656.

Some years before his death Fructuosus was, against his will, elevated to the archiepiscopal see of Braga, by the unanimous suffrages of the tenth Council of Toledo. But he did not cease to practise the rule of monastic life, and to build new monasteries. And soon, thanks to his unwearied activity, he had covered Cantabria and Lusitania with communities of both sexes. He had surveyed all the coasts of Spain from Cape Finisterre to Cape St. Vincent, crossing the embouchure of the rivers which were to be named Douro and Guadalquivir, reaching the promontories, the gulfs, and the islands, even to the spot where Cadiz was to be,[271] and seeking everywhere asylums for prayer and solitude. Thanks to him, the extreme frontier of the West will be guarded by a line of monastic garrisons. The great waves of the ocean rushing from the shores of another hemisphere, from that half of the world still unknown to Christians, will be met by the gaze and the prayers of the monks from the lofty cliffs of the Iberian peninsula. There they shall stand firm, awaiting the Mohammedan invasion; there they shall endure and survive it; there they shall preserve a nucleus of faith and Christian virtue, for those incomparable days when, from those shores freed by unwearied heroism, Spain and Portugal shall spring forth to discover a new world, and to plant the cross in Africa, in Asia, and in America.

The shore of the ocean peopled with monks.

[270] S. Fructuosi *Carmina*, ap. Florez, *Espana Sagrada*.

[271] "Cum præfatam Gaditanam ingressus fuisset insulam . . . ædificavit sanctum ope Die monasterium." — Valerius, c. 14. The particulars of the numerous foundations of St. Fructuosus may be seen in the great work of Antonio de Yepes, *Coronica General de la Orden de San Benito*, folio, 1609, centuria ii. pp. 175, 187, 223, and following pages. This work, despite its inaccuracies, so often exposed by Mabillon, is invaluable for everything connected with monastic Spain.

BOOK VI.

THE MONKS UNDER THE FIRST MEROVINGIANS.

SUMMARY.

I. Gaul Conquered by the Franks. — State of Gaul under the Roman Empire. — Relative benefits from the invasion of the barbarians. — The Franks arrest and beat back the other Barbarians. — Character of the government of the Franks in Gaul: equality of the Gauls and Franks. — Fatal contact of Frank barbarity and the depravity of the Gallo-Romans. — The nobility of the two races restrain the kings, who incline to autocracy and the Roman system of taxation. — The Franks alone escape Arianism: they respect the liberty of religion. — Munificence of the Merovingians towards the monasteries, strangely mixed with their vices and crimes. — The monks secure the civilizing influence of the Church over the Franks.

II. Arrival of the Benedictines in Gaul. — St. Maur at Glanfeuil in Anjou. — Propagation of the Benedictine rule. — First encounter of Frank royalty with the sons of St. Benedict. — Theodebert and St. Maur.

III. Previous Relations between the Merovingians and the Monks. — Clovis and his sons. — Foundation of Micy, near Orleans. — Clovis and St. Maixent. — St. Leobin tortured by the Franks. — The sister and daughter of Clovis become nuns: The latter founds St. Pierre-le-Vif at Sens. — The monasteries of Auvergne, ransom of prisoners and refuge of slaves: Basolus and Porcianus. — Thierry I. and St. Nizier. — Clodomir, the Abbot Avitus, and St. Cloud. — The tonsure and the forced vocations. — Childebert, the monastic king par excellence: his relations with St. Eusice in Berry, and St. Marculph in Neustria. — Emigration of the British monks into Armorica: continued existence of paganism in that peninsula; poetical traditions. — Conversion of Armorica by the British emigrants. — The Christian bards: Ysulio and the blind Herve. — Armorican monasteries: Rhuys; St. Matthew of the Land's End; Landevenec; Dol; Samson, Abbot of Dol, and Archbishop. — The seven saints of Brittany, bishops and monks. — Their intercourse with Childebert. — St. Germain, Bishop of Paris; Abbey of St. Germain-des-Près. — Clotaire I. and St. Medard. — Gregory of Tours and the sons of Clotaire. — Note on the foundations of King Gontran in Burgundy. — The Abbot Aredius protests

against the fiscal system of Chilperic, and frees his serfs. — Maternal love and monastic song.

IV. St. Radegund. — Her origin and her captivity. — Clotaire makes her his wife. — Note on St. Consortia. — Radegund takes the veil from the hands of St. Medard, establishes herself at Poitiers, and founds there the monastery of St. Croix. — Clotaire wishes to reclaim her: St. Germain prevents him. — Cloister life of Radegund. — Her journey to Arles. — Her relations with Fortunatus. — Her poetry. — Her indifference to the outer world; her solicitude for peace among the Merovingian princes. — Her austerities. — Her friendship for the Benedictine St. Junian. — They both died on the same day. — Revolt of the nuns of St. Croix under Chrodield and Basine, princesses of the Merovingian blood. — This occurs at the time of the arrival of Columba, the great Celtic missionary, in Gaul.

V. The Monks and Nature. — State of the forests of Gaul from the fifth to the seventh century. — Invasion of solitude; St. Liephard at Meung-sur-Loire: deserts in Gaul. — The monks in the forests. — St. Seine in Burgundy. — St. Imier in Jura. — St. Junian in Limousin. — The anchorites of the woods transformed into monks by the multitude which followed them. — St. Laumer in Perche. — St. Magloire in Armorica and Jersey. — Donations of Frankish nobles, some accepted, others refused; St. Laumer once more; popular discontent. — St. Malo.

The monks and the brigands: St. Seine and St. Evroul. — The monks and the hunters: Brachio and the wild boar, at Menat. — Right of shelter for game. — St. Calais and his buffalo; Childebert and Ultrogotha. — St. Marculph and his hare. — St. Giles and his hind. — The Abbess Ninnok. — St. Desle and Clotaire II. — St. Basle and his wild boar. — St. Laumer and his hind. — Supernatural empire of the monks over the animals, the consequence of man's return to innocence. — Miracles in History. — Vives, Titus Livius, De Maistre. — The monks and the wild beasts in the Thebaid. — Gerasimus and his lion. — St. Martin and his plungeons. — St. Benedict and his raven. — The monks and the birds in Gaul: St. Maxent; St. Valery; St. Calais; St. Malo; St. Magloire. — Sites of monasteries indicated by animals: Fécamp. — St. Thierry; St. Berchaire at Hautvilliers. — Domestication of fallow-deer by the monks: Celtic legends: the wolves and stags: Herve, Pol de Leon, Colodocus. — St. Leonor and the stags at the plough. — Agricultural works of the monks in the forest. — Clearing. — St. Brieuc. — Fruit trees. — Various occupations. — Influence of their example on the rural populations. — St. Fiacre and his garden. — Karilef and his treasure. — Theodulph and his plough. — Solicitude of the monks for the spiritual welfare of the peasants. — Council of Rouen. — The forest canticle, the monastic spring in the woods.

Si quid hoc in opere vobis præclarum videbitur, id veterum est, iis impertite quam merentur laudem. At me sicubi conjectura fefellit, si non sum scriptorum sententiam probe assecutus, si adulterinum aliquod scriptum pro legitimo suscepi, si respui quod rectum erat et purum, date veniam et me admonete. — BOLLANDUS, *Acta Sanctorum*, t. i. p. xliv. (*e*).

I. — GAUL CONQUERED BY THE FRANKS.

We have overstepped the course of time to indicate all that monastic institutions owe to the greatest of popes, and what they became in the Iberian peninsula under leaders imbued with his spirit. We must now go back a century and cross the Alps and Pyrenees, to concentrate our narrative in Gaul, in that country where Marmoutier, Lerins, Condat, and other great foundations had not exhausted the monastic impulse, and where Providence destined the Benedictine tree to shoot out its most vigorous and productive branches.

In the year of St. Benedict's birth, Clovis began to reign over the Salian Franks, and during the whole lifetime of the patriarch, Gaul, disputed by the Franks against the Goths and Burgundians, gradually yielded to the powerful pressure of the Merovingians and their conquering bands. The evils which accompanied that conquest are known. But the condition to which the rule of Rome had reduced Gaul when the Franks, coming last after so many other Barbarians, took it for their prey, should not be forgotten. Under the emperors, Rome had carried corruption into all the provinces of the world which under the republic she had conquered. Tacitus shows us that every seat of Roman administration was a permanent school of oppression and depravity, where avarice and sensuality reigned always insatiable and unpunished.[1] Of the old Gauls who had overrun Spain, Italy, Greece, and even Asia Minor; who had filled the world with the din of their arms and the terror of their name; who had conquered Rome; whom Rome had afterwards vanquished and enslaved, but whom she had never surpassed nor even equalled in heroism and greatness of soul, — of these men none remained. The tyranny of the Cæsars had annihilated them. In vain their sons rose under Augustus, Tiberius, Nero, and Vespasian, protesting thus against the pretended amelioration in the fate of the Roman provinces under the Empire. Vainly, from age to age, had Gaul, in despair of regaining her independence, attempted to cheat her misery by imposing Gaulish emperors on Rome. In vain the insurgent and half-Chris-

480.

Condition of Gaul under Roman rule.

[1] Compare DOELLINGER, *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, p. 728.

tian Bagaudes had meditated the substitution of a kind of Gaulish empire in place of the Roman. Ground down by the merciless millstone of the imperial government and taxation, Gaul had lost its nationality, its civil and municipal institutions, its territorial wealth, its ancient Celtic tongue, and even its name, one after the other; its inhabitants were known only under the name of Romans, a name which for them was the symbol of decrepitude and shame.[2] In place of their ancient national worship — Druidical sacrifices, which were interdicted under pain of death — the hideous idolatry of the Cæsars, whom a vile senate declared divine, was imposed upon them. That dauntless courage which had hitherto pointed them out to the admiration of the world, had disappeared with their liberty.[3] The ruling classes were enslaved and degraded, while the lower ranks of the people had gained nothing: on the contrary, in proportion to the extension of great estates, the husbandmen found their lot aggravated, and the universal servitude weighed upon them with a crushing yoke. The free clients of whom Cæsar speaks had disappeared. The Gaulish chiefs, transformed into degenerate patricians, had the vast estates on which they scarcely ever lived cultivated by slaves, like the plantations of our colonies before the emancipation of the negroes.[4] It has been calculated that there scarcely remained, in the time of Constantine, a million of freemen in all that immense region.[5]

The Church alone remained erect, the sole asylum of human dignity and freedom, under this frightful oppression. She alone put some check upon injustice and tyranny, mitigated the overwhelming poverty of the people, encouraged agriculture in her own lands, retained in her bosom the memory and practice of popular election, and assured *Defenders*, in

[2] "The state of the Gauls under the imperial government was one of the most debasing and cruel political slavery." — Mlle. de Lézardière, *Théorie des Lois Politiques de la France.* "The title of *Roman citizens* which the Gauls bore had long belonged only to slaves." — Mably, *Observations sur l'Histoire de France*, t. i. p. 243.

[3] "Amissa virtute pariter et libertate." — Tacitus *Agric.*, ii.; *Ann.* xi. 18; *Germ.*, 28. Doellinger, *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, pp. 611–613.

[4] See the excellent summary of the oppression and ruin of the Gauls under Roman dominion, which is given, after many other writers, by Sir James Stephen, *Lectures on the History of France* (London), 1859, t. i. p. 57. As to the details, M. Guizot, in his *Essais sur l'Histoire de France*, and his second lesson of the course for 1824, has been surpassed as yet by none, except perhaps by Le Huerou, in chap. viii. of his *Origines Mérovingiennes* (Paris), 1843.

[5] Henri Martin, *Histoire de France*, t. i. p. 292, 4th edition.

the persons of her bishops, to cities abandoned or ransomed by their magistrates. But her influence, far from being preponderant, could only struggle imperfectly against the universal decay, and had no power to reproduce those civic virtues which were stifled like the free cities under the cosmopolitan despotism of the emperors.[6] Four centuries of Roman government had been enough to divest Gaul of all law and order in civil affairs, as well as of all national and personal independence. How could such a population, debased and exhausted by a rule, the very weakness of which increased its minute and imbecile tyranny, resist the repeated inroads of the Barbarians? The Arverne aristocracy alone, which seemed to be animated still by the spirit of the great Vercingetorix, and which had retained popular sympathy by some unknown means, struggled with the obstinacy of despair against the Visigoths in the first place, and then against the sons of Clovis. Everywhere else the Barbarian domination was accepted as a kind of deliverance.

Mutual advantages of the Barbarian invasion.

And indeed it actually was such, for the German nations brought with them that manly energy which the serfs of the empire lacked. Life had everywhere ebbed away; the conquerors brought a new life to the soil which they invaded, as well as to the men whom they incorporated under their victorious sway. All that remained of the nobility of Gaul saw them appear with terror; but what had the rural colonists and humble townspeople to lose by this change of masters? On the contrary, they could only gain by the destruction of that Roman system of taxation, the most rapacious that was ever dreamed of. To take for themselves a portion, the half or a third, of landed property and slaves, as did the Burgundians and Visigoths, but at the same time to exempt the remainder from all those exactions which under the Romans compelled the landowners to abandon all they possessed to the treasury, was to bring an evident and real relief to an insupportable state of things.[7]

As for the Franks, there is no evidence that they ever decreed general confiscations. The discoveries of modern study have proved, on the contrary, that they generally respected the private property of the Gallo-Romans. According to all appearance, they contented themselves with the

[6] Stephen, loc. cit.; H. Martin, p. 332.

[7] Paul Roth., *Geschichte der Benefizialwesens;* Leo, *Ursprung des Deutschen Volkes und Reiches*, p. 324; Cantu, *Storia degl' Italiani*, ch. 63; Stephen, loc. cit., p. 300; Le Huerou, p. 268.

lands which were at first conceded to them by the emperors, and with the vast stretches of uncultivated soil, abandoned in consequence of the universal impoverishment, which they shared among themselves by lot, and which were called *allodia*, while their kings appropriated the immense estates of the imperial treasury. Let us add, that in expelling the Roman magistrates, they seem to have interfered little with municipal government, but to have left the principal part of it in the hands of the bishops, and we shall be able to conceive how, as the latest of our historians affirms, the mass of the people had more horror for the pedantic and systematic oppression of the empire, than for the brutal and capricious sway of the Barbarians.[8]

Besides, the Romans of the empire, as has been often remarked, carried into Gaul a principle proper to themselves, the fatal principle of the supremacy of cities. The Germans, on the contrary, in their primitive state, knew no life but that of the fields, a rural and sylvan existence. The village was, as it may still be seen in India, the foundation of their national life. In conquering Gaul, they restored life to its plains; they created there the village, the free and rural community, and emancipated them from the sway of towns; they constituted there the most influential element in the new nationality. This preponderance was only more and more manifested and consolidated in proportion as the feudal system developed itself and struck root in the soil.

The Franks arrest and beat back the other Barbarians.

The Franks conferred, besides, a crowning service on Gaul, which she had looked for in vain from the last emperors. St. Jerome has left us a formidable list of the Barbarian nations which had invaded her lands under imperial rule. "The countries that lie between the Alps and Pyrenees, between the Rhine and the sea, have been devastated by the Quade, the Vandal, the Sarmate, the Alain, the Gepid, the Herule, the Burgonde, the Aleman, and, oh supreme calamity! by the Hun."[9] Coming after all these ferocious predecessors, each of whom, except the Burgondes, had only passed through Gaul like a tempest, the Franks debarred from entrance the other pagan nations who pressed upon their steps. They turned against the current by which they had themselves been brought. They made vigorous head against the Alemans, the Saxons, the

[8] Henri Martin, p. 354. Le Huerou furnishes proof of this by undeniable evidence, op. cit., p. 251.

[9] *Epist. ad Ageruchiam*, t. iv. p. 748, edit. 1706.

Slaves, and the Avars, who, but for them, would have crossed the Rhine and invaded Gaul. Becoming Christians, not in a body or all at once in the train of Clovis, as has been erroneously supposed, but very gradually and slowly,[10] they set their face against the enemies of Christendom. They remained, long after their conversion, as wild, fierce, and cruel as before. They were not transformed in a day. Two centuries of fratricidal wars between the Merovingian kings demonstrate this only too clearly, while they also prove the superstitious veneration, the pagan idolatry, which the Franks entertained for that long-haired dynasty, the scions of which they deposed and murdered one by one, but apart from which no one among them had yet dreamt of seeking chiefs of a different race.

Character of the Frank rule.

Their barbarism cannot be denied; we must not only believe all that historians have said of them, but add that here, as throughout all antiquity, these narratives are far from reaching the full extent "of unknown tyranny, unpunished rapine, and unavenged destruction."[11] But we must not believe that the Franks were, as has been assumed, less civilized, less human, and greater oppressors than the other Barbarians. In no point of view do they deserve a lower place than the Visigoths or Burgundians. They had evidently as much inclination and attraction towards the cultivation of the mind and literature. The chapel which the Merovingian kings instituted in the earliest times of their conversion, with the school which was immediately attached to it, as an inseparable appendage to the royal residence, became soon a nursery of zealous and learned clerks, where the young Frank and Gallo-Roman nobility drew such instruction as was best adapted to their time and habits. The important charges of the Church and court were given to those who had distinguished themselves there.[12] All the biographies of

Palatine education of the young nobility.

[10] More than a century after Clovis, we still find pagans among Franks of the most elevated rank. St. Lupus, bishop of Sens, exiled by Clotaire II. about 615, was intrusted to the care of a duke called Boson, who was still pagan, and who occupied the shores of the Oise: "Ubi erant templa phanatica a decurionibus culta . . . prædictum ducem vitali tinxit in lavacro, *plurimumque Francorum exercitum*, qui adhuc erroris detinebatur laqueis, illuminavit per baptismum." — Act. SS. Bolland., t. 1 Sept., p. 259. The second successor of St. Colomba at Bobbio, the Abbot Burtulf, who died in 640, was of pagan birth, although a near relation of St. Arnoul, bishop of Metz. It will be seen hereafter, that a great proportion of the Franks established in Belgium remained idolaters even in the eighth century.

[11] Ozanam, *Etudes German.*, t. ii. p. 502.

[12] Numerous and precise details on this subject are to be found in *L'His-*

the saints are unanimous in stating this fact; and Gregory of Tours confirms it, by speaking of the *palatine erudition* as of a kind of ecclesiastical and political novitiate which was in active operation under the grandsons of Clovis.[13]

Equality of the Franks and Gauls.

It is still more certain that the oppression of the Gallo-Romans by the Franks was never systematic, nor so specially cruel and complete, as a theory cleverly upheld in our own days, but contradicted by all contemporary writers, would have it to be. Doubtless in the north-east district of Gaul, which was the first occupied by the Franks, who were then entirely pagan, the Roman population was cruelly spoiled and maltreated, if not entirely exterminated. But after their conversion, in proportion as they approached the Loire, and especially when they spread themselves to the south of that river, the Gallo-Romans are seen to have preserved all their property, and to have enjoyed absolutely the same rights as their conquerors. Among the Franks, as among the Gauls, poor men, artisans and slaves, are to be seen, as well as rich men and nobles. The nobles of Gaul, and members of those families called senatorial, occupied the same rank as under the Roman empire, and were associated in the court and military retinue of the Merovingian kings with the leudes and *antrustions* of Frankish race. The Gallo-Romans are everywhere found in the highest ranks, not only in the Church, where they had, up to the end of the sixth century, almost exclusive possession of the bishoprics, but among the *companions of the king*, among the dukes and counts, at the head of armies, and even in the offices of the royal household, which might well have been exclusively reserved for the companions and compatriots of the prince.

It is at the same time necessary to remark the difference established by the Salic law in the rate of *compensation* due for murders committed upon the Franks and upon the Romans, from which we perceive that the life of a Roman is estimated at half the value only of that of a Frank. Except that single particular, in which the natural pride of the victor manifests itself, no trace of radical distinction is to be found between the conquering and conquered races. The Gallo-

toire de St. Léger, by Dom Pitra, p. 114, and Appendix. This word *chapel*, as synonymous with *oratory*, is derived, according to Ducange, from the little *cape* or cloak of St. Martin, which was one of the most noted Merovingian relics.

[13] *Vit. S. Aredii Abbatis*, c. 3.

Roman retained his private rights, but was subject to the same laws and obtained the same guarantees as the Frank. As for public rights, he was exposed, like the Frank, but not more than he, to the atrocious violences which daily broke out in that society, and which were as often originated by himself as by the Frank or Burgundian.[14] For there were Gallo-Romans as deeply imbued as the Barbarians with that ferocity which is inspired by the possession of uncontrolled wealth and strength. They had their share in almost all the crimes and treacheries which appear in the annals of this unhappy period. It has been said with justice, "The greatest evil of Barbarian government was perhaps the influence of the greedy and corrupt Romans, who insinuated themselves into the confidence of their new masters."[15] It is to them especially that those refinements of debauchery and perfidy, which it is so surprising to find amid the savage brutality of the German tribes, should be attributed. They instructed their conquerors in the art of oppression, and taught them how to degrade their compatriots, by means which the natural obtuseness of the Goths and Teutons could never have suggested. The Barbarians derived no advantage from their contact with the Roman world, depraved as it was under the empire. They brought with them manly virtues, of which the conquered race had lost even the recollection; but they borrowed, at the same time, abject and contagious vices, of which the Germanic world had no conception. They found Christianity there; but before they yielded to its beneficent influence, they had time to plunge into all the baseness and debauchery of a civilization corrupted long before it was vanquished. The patriarchal system of government which characterized the ancient Germans, in their relations with their children and slaves as well as with their chiefs, fell into ruin in contact with that contagious depravity.

Fatal contact between Frank barbarity and Gallo-Roman depravity.

At a later period, when the Christian spirit had established its empire, and when all the old Roman remains had been absorbed and transformed by the German element under the first Carlovingians, the evil lessened, and if it did not dis-

[14] Roth and Leo, in the works already quoted, and Waitz (*Deutsche Verfassungs Geschichte*), have shown beyond dispute this identity of position between the Frankish and Gaulish nobility under the Merovingian sway: the Abbé Dubos had made it the basis of his absurd system on the absence of all conquest.

[15] Henri Martin, t. i. p. 394. Compare Augustin Thierry, *Récits Mérov.*, t. ii. p. 45, and Albert Du Boys, *Histoire du Droit Criminel.*

appear completely, all the nations of Christendom at least could constitute themselves under laws and manners which they needed neither to blush for nor to complain of. But at the period of which we treat nothing could be more sad than the first fusion of Germanic barbarism and Roman corruption. All the excesses of a savage condition were then combined with the vices of a civilization learnedly depraved. From this perverse and fatal origin flow these revolting abuses of seignorial right, which, continued and developed by the course of time, debased the feudal system and made it so unpopular. And here we must seek the secret of these monstrous examples of treason and ferocity which appear on almost every page of the narrative of Gregory of Tours, and throw a sanguinary light upon the early pages of our history.

The kings show an inclination towards the Roman despotism and taxing system.

Thence, also, came the attempts of the Merovingian kings to re-establish and aggravate the Roman system of taxation. Sometimes it was the churches from which they exacted the payment of a third of their revenues;[16] sometimes it was the poll-tax which they tried to establish, not as among the Romans, upon the plebeians without landed property, but upon all, and first on the Franks themselves. But here the old Germanic law took the upper hand. Even in the absence of the national assemblies, which seem to have been suspended during the reign of Clovis and his immediate successors,[17] the resistance was energetic and triumphant. The Merovingian kings had vainly manifested an inclination to imitate the despotism of the Roman emperors, for they had always to reckon with the Frank nobles, who would not renounce the freedom of their ancestors upon soil conquered by themselves, and who, reinforced by the descendants of the old chivalrous races of Gaul,[18] soon formed around the throne an aristocracy at once civil and warlike, free and powerful, as proud of its origin as of its rights, and resolved not to be reduced to the vile level of the Roman senate.[19] According to the old privilege of

They are restrained by the nobility of the two races.

[16] Greg. Tur., iv. 2.

[17] Waitz, *Deutsche Verfassungs Geschichte*, tit. ii. p. 480.

[18] The *Equites*, of whom Cæsar speaks, with their dependants, whose analogy with German manners he did not understand, and whose position he has not sufficiently distinguished from sevitude.

[19] Terms which prove the great importance attached to birth are to be found on every page of the contemporary authors, and especially in the Lives of the Saints: *seniores, potentes, meliores, nobiles. . . . Claro stemmate ortus. . . . Ex progenie celsa Francorum Prosapia Francorum altis satis et nobilibus parentibus*, &c. Compare Waitz, op. cit.

German freedom, they assumed the right of speaking out on every subject, interfering actively in all public interests, resisting all usurpations, and striking down the guilty.[20] Their superstitious regard for the Merovingian blood, their traditional devotion to the person of the chief, led them to fill domestic offices about the persons of their kings, which among the ancient Romans were reserved for slaves, but which bore no servile character among the German races, and were, on the contrary, the privilege of the principal men of the nation, who were called *trusty*.[21] But this loyalty did not prevent them from opposing to the violence of their master other outbreaks of violence not less dreadful, and often not less illegitimate. "Farewell," said a deputation of Austrasian lords to King Gontran of Burgundy, grandson of Clovis — "farewell, oh king! we take leave of thee, reminding thee that the axe which has broken the head of thy brethren is still bright; and it shall be thy brains next which it will dash out." [22]

Connection of the Franks with the Church.

By what prodigious change did these scarcely-baptized Barbarians become the cherished nation of the Church, and the chosen race of Christendom? This will be seen by the following narrative. In the mean time, it must be acknowledged that, by a singular privilege, they were never Arians. They alone, among all the Barbarian conquerors of the empire, never permitted their energy and simplicity to become the victims of that heresy, which exercised an inexplicable ascendency over all the Germanic tribes, and which, overcome among the old Christians, formed for itself a triumphant asylum among their conquerors. Closing Gaul against the other Barbarians, and assuring Catholic unity within her by pursuing heresy without open persecution, was to render two crowning services to new-born Christendom. South of the Loire, the Catholic population, which was too well aware of the persecutions raised against the orthodox clergy in Spain and Africa by the Arian Barbarians, passionately longed for the government of the Franks.[23] It was for this reason that St. Remy said to the detractors of Clovis, "Much must be

They alone escaped from Arianism.

[20] Aug. Thierry, *Récits Mérovingiens*, tit. ii. p. 95.

[21] *Antrustion*, man in the confidence (*trust*) of the chief, a term translated in the Latin version of the Salic law by that of *conviva regis*.

[22] "Valedicimus tibi, o rex. . . . Scimus solidam esse securim . . . celerius tuum librabit defixa cerebrum." — Greg. Turon., lib. vii. c. 14.

[23] "Amore desiderabili." — Greg. Turon., *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. ii. c. 23.

pardoned to him who has been the propagator of the faith, and the saviour of provinces." This explains without justifying those terms of adulation which most of the ecclesiastical writers have addressed to princes whose public and private life was stained with atrocious crimes. Different from the Byzantine emperors, who interposed the authority of the state in spiritual affairs on all occasions, and who believed themselves better theologians than the bishops, they meddled little in theology, and, except in the too numerous cases where they tampered with the freedom of episcopal elections in favor of their domestics or followers, they left the Church entirely independent in matters of faith and discipline. They displayed, also, great liberality to the bishops and monks: they did not content themselves with restoring to the Church all that had been taken from her; they selected from the immense possessions which had become crown-lands by conquest, at the same time as they divided the land into *benefices* for their *trusty* laymen, other vast territories, mostly uncultivated, desert, or covered with inaccessible forests with which they endowed the principal monasteries erected during the Merovingian period.[24] The great farms, or *towns*, where the Frankish kings held their court, in the centre of agricultural labors, were repeatedly transformed into religious establishments.[25]

The Merovingians respect the freedom of faith.

Their liberality towards monasteries.

And yet they were sad Christians. While they respected the freedom of the Catholic faith, and made external profession of it, they violated without scruple all its precepts, and at the same time the simplest laws of humanity. After having prostrated themselves before the tomb of some holy martyr or confessor, after having distinguished themselves by the choice of an irreproachable bishop, after having listened respectfully to the voice of a pontiff or monk, we see them, sometimes in outbreaks of fury, sometimes by cold-blooded cruelties, give full course to the evil instincts of their savage nature. Their incredible perversity was most apparent in the domestic tragedies, the fratricidal executions and assassinations, of which Clovis gave the first example, and which marked the history of his son and grandson with an ineffaceable stain. Polygamy and per-

Strangely mingled with vices and crimes.

[24] The royal treasury is mentioned in the first well-authenticated charter of Clovis, in favor of the Abbey of Micy, near Orleans. — Ap. Brequigny, No. 6.

[25] For example, Ebreuil, in Auvergne,

jury mingled in their daily life with a semi-pagan superstition; and in reading these bloody biographies, scarcely lightened by some transient gleams of faith or humility, it is difficult to believe that, in embracing Christianity, they gave up a single pagan vice or adopted a single Christian virtue.

It was against this barbarity of the soul, far more alarming than grossness and violence of manners, that the Church triumphantly struggled. From the midst of these frightful disorders, of this double current of corruption and ferocity, the pure and resplendent light of Christian sanctity was about to rise. But the secular clergy, itself tainted by the general demoralization of the two races, was not sufficient for this task.[26] They needed the powerful and soon preponderating assistance of the monastic army. It did not fail: the Church and France owe to it the decisive victory of Christian civilization over a race much more difficult to subdue than the degenerate subjects of Rome or Byzantium. While the Franks, coming from the north, completed the subjugation of Gaul, the Benedictines were about to approach from the south, and superimpose a pacific and beneficent dominion upon the Germanic Barbarian conquest. The junction and union of these forces, so unequal in their civilizing power, were destined to exercise a sovereign influence over the future of our country.

The monks came to insure the civilizing influence of the Church.

II. — ARRIVAL OF THE BENEDICTINES IN GAUL.

The fame of Benedict and his work had not been slow to cross the frontiers of Italy; it resounded specially into Gaul. A year before the death of the patriarch, two envoys arrived at Monte Cassino from the Gallo-Roman prelate, Innocent, bishop of Maus, who, not content with forty monasteries which had arisen during his episcopacy in the country of the Cenomans, still desired to see his diocese enriched by a colony formed by the disciples of the new legislator of cenobites in Italy. Benedict confided this mission to the dearest and most fervent of his disciples, a young deacon named Maurus, of patrician origin like himself, who had worthily prepared himself for these distant labors by

Mission of St. Maur into Gaul.

[26] Leo (op. cit.) has very justly remarked, that owing to the demoralization of the native clergy, the complete conversion of the Franks was a longer and more arduous task to the ecclesiastical and monastic apostles of Gaul than the conversion of England, or even of Germany, had been, where all was done in a single stroke by a body of foreign missionaries and monks.

outdoing the austerities of the Rule, and who seemed to be regarded by the whole community as the natural successor of their founder. He gave him four companions (one of whom has written the history of the mission),[27] and bestowed upon him a copy of the Rule, written with his own hand, together with the weights for the bread and the measure for the wine which should be allotted to each monk every day, to serve as unchanging types of that abstinence which was to be one of the strongest points of the new institution.

His journey.

At the head of this handful of missionaries, who went to sow afar the seed destined to produce so great a harvest, Maurus came down from Monte Cassino, crossed Italy and the Alps, paused at Agaune, the sanctuary which the Burgundian monarch had just raised over the relics of the Theban legion,[28] then went into the Jura to visit the colonies of Condat, and doubtless to make the rule of his master known there. Arrived upon the banks of the Loire, and repulsed by the successor of the bishop who had called him, he stopped in Anjou, which was then governed by a viscount called Florus, in the name and under the authority of the king of Austrasia, Theodebert, the grandson of Clovis. This viscount offered one of his estates to the disciple of Benedict, that he might establish his colony there, besides giving one of his sons to become a monk, and announcing his own intention of consecrating himself to God. Maurus accepted the gift, but only by a formal donation, and before witnesses; "for," he said to the Frank lord, "our observances require peace and security above all."[29] In this estate,

[27] The Life of St. Maur, by his companion, Faustus, has suffered some grievous interpolations in the ninth century, according to the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti*, by D'Achery and Mabillon. Father Papebroch (ap. Bolland. d. 16 and 22 May) regards it as completely mendacious. But the authenticity of his mission, and of the principal features of his biography, contested by Basnage and Baillet, has been victoriously demonstrated by Mabillon himself (*Præf. in Sæc.* I., Act. SS. O. S. B.), and, above all, by Dom Ruinart in the Appendix of Vol. I. of the *Annales Benedictines* of Mabillon. Compare, also, the learned *Histoire des Evêques du Mans*, by Dom Piolin, a Benedictine of Solesmes, 1851, t. i. p. 237. This last work includes some very valuable details on the propagation of cloistral life in Maine during the sixth century.

[28] See above, p. 291.

[29] "Observatio Ordinis nostri summam deposcit quietem et securitatem. . . . Te tradente nobis coram testibus. . . . Scripto Testamento tradidit ei omnia et de suo jure in ejus delegavit potestatem atque dominium." — *Vit. S. Mauri*, c. 42, 43. This passage may be one of the interpolations of the ninth century pointed out by Mabillon; nevertheless, we have instanced it as one of the first examples of the forms employed for donations of this nature, so numerous subsequent to the sixth century in Gaul.

bathed by the waters of the Loire, he founded the monastery of Glanfeuil, which afterwards took his own name.[30] The site of this monastery, now lost among the vineyards of Anjou, merits the grateful glance of every traveller who is not insensible to the advantages which flowed from that first Benedictine colony over entire France.

He founds Glanfeuil, the first Benedictine monastery in Gaul.

With a touching and legitimate reminiscence of ancient monastic glory, Maurus consecrated one of the four churches or chapels of his new abbey to St. Martin, who had founded, at no great distance, and on the banks of the same river, the still celebrated sanctuary of Marmoutier,[31] and another to St. Severin, that Roman monk who, on the banks of the Danube, subdued the ferocity of the Barbarians while he blessed the future of Odoacer. The beloved son of St. Benedict spent forty years at the head of his French colony; he saw as many as a hundred and forty monks officiate there; and when he died, after having lived apart for two years in an isolated cell, to prepare himself in silence for appearing before God,[32] he had dropped into the soil of Gaul a germ which could neither perish nor be exhausted; and which, a thousand years after, was to produce under the very name of the modest founder of Glanfeuil a new efflorescence of monastic genius destined to become the synonyme of laborious learning, and one of the most undisputed glories of France.[33]

A certain obscurity hangs over the early progress of the Benedictine rule in Gaul after the first foundation of St. Maur. We have already pointed out the progress of cenobitical life due to the great schools of Marmoutier, Lerins, and Condat, before the age of St. Benedict. This progress did not diminish after him, since eighty

Progress of the Benedictine rule in Gaul.

[30] St. Maur-sur-Loire. The relics of Maurus remained there until the ninth century, when, for fear of the Normans, they were transferred to St. Maur-les-Fossés, near Paris, another monastery which will be often mentioned.

[31] See p. 269. To judge of the influence which was exercised over Gaul by the great Martin, founder of Marmoutier, two centuries after his lifetime, we must read the four books by Gregory of Tours, entitled *De Miraculis S. Martini*, of which the *Société de l'Histoire de France* has just published a new edition, revised by M. Bordier.

[32] "Biennio ante mortem siluit sejunctus ab hominibus, et solus in superni inspectoris oculis habitavit secum." — *Breviarium Monasticum.*

[33] The brotherhood of St. Maur, immortalized by the works of Mabillon, Montfaucon, Ruinart, and many others, was created in 1618. It sprang from the association formed by various very ancient abbeys for the adoption of the reform introduced at the end of the sixteenth century in the monasteries of Lorraine by Dom Didier de la Cour, abbot of St. Vanne.

new establishments can be reckoned during the course of the sixth century alone in the valleys of the Saone and Rhone, ninety-four between the Pyrenees and the Loire, fifty-four from the Loire to the Vosges, and ten from the Vosges to the Rhine.[34] This was a renewed and more complete conversion of that great country. Each province by degrees received for its apostles holy monks, who were also often bishops, and who founded at the same time dioceses and monasteries, the latter destined to be citadels and nurseries of the diocesan clergy.[35]

The councils of the Gauls were more and more frequently occupied with questions of monastic discipline, without, however, noting any special congregation. They showed themselves animated by the spirit which dictated the famous canon of the General Council of Chalcedon in 451, in virtue of which monks were placed under the control of bishops. That of Agde, in 511, renewed the prohibition against founding new monasteries without the knowledge of the bishop. Those of Orleans (511, and especially 533), of Epaone (517), and of Arles (558), completely subjected monasteries to the authority and superintendence of the bishops. The abbots could neither be absent nor dispose of any of the property of the community without episcopal permission; once a year they were to wait upon their bishop to receive his advice, and if need were his corrections.[36] The Council held in the Basilica of St. Martin at Tours, in 567, which quotes Seneca in its fourteenth Canon in favor of the precautions to be taken against the scandal of incontinence, pronounces the penalty of excommunication in Canon XV. against every monk who should marry, and against every judge who should refuse to declare the dissolution of such a marriage. But by the great number of different rules and successive reforms, and still more by the narratives of violence and abuse which Gregory of Tours has honestly transmitted to us, the resistance met with by the Christian ideal of monastic life may well be understood.

How did all these communities, so numerous and diverse, come to recognize the Benedictine Rule as that which was to insure their existence and prosperity? This can only be

[34] M. Mignet has taken these numbers from the Benedictine Annals of Mabillon. See his fine *Mémoire sur la Conversion de l'Allemagne par les Moines*, p. 32.

[35] "Ut urbis esset munimentum." — *Vie de S. Domnole*, bishop and founder of St. Vincent-du-Mans, c. 4, ap. Bolland., 16 Maii.

[36] Concil. Aurel., an. 511, c. 19.

discovered in some houses more or less celebrated. It was not the work of one of those sudden, radical, and ephemeral transformations to which modern history has accustomed us; it was the slow and instinctive progress of an institution which sought the conditions of permanent durability. The conquest was made gradually and imperceptibly.[37] But it is undeniable that this progress was universal, despite the formidable rivalry of the Rule of St. Columba; and not less undeniable is the fact that the mission of St. Maurus was the channel by which the sovereign paternity of the Italian legislator extended by degrees to all the monasteries of Gaul.[38]

First meeting of the Merovingian monarchs with the Benedictines.

This mission marks out besides, in history, the first encounter of the Benedictine order with that French monarchy, then only dawning under the shield of Clovis and his descendants, but which we shall see through many centuries the faithful and grateful ally of the sons of St. Benedict. The district of Anjou in which Glanfeuil was situated fell to the lot of that grandson of Clovis, named Theodebert,[39] who reigned at Metz and over Austrasia. It was he from whom the Viscount Florus, according to tradition, had to obtain, first the necessary authority for the establishment of the foreign monks, and then permission to enroll himself among them. This king, cele-

[37] "Nunquam nobis venit in mentem ut asserere velimus omnia aut pleraque Galliarum monasteria, adveniente Mauro, Benedictinam regulam statim admisisse. . . . Quæ postea sensim sine sensu ita per alia monasteria sequentibus annis propagata fuerit, donec tandem sola prævaluerit in toto Galliarum imperio." — D. Ruinart, *in Append. Annal. Bened.*, tom. i. p. 636.

[38] The formal testimony of St. Odillon, the celebrated abbot of Cluny is as follows: "Post Sancti Benedicti ex hac vita migrationem, per Beatum Maurum illius discipulum omnis pene Gallia ejus institutiones et religionis instituta suscepit, atque per eumdem Maurum, eosque quos ille ad justitiam erudivit, per longa temporum spatia, eadem religio ad perfectionis cumulum excrevit." — Odilo, *Vit. S. Maioli*, ap. *Surium*, 11 Maii.

[39] Professor Roth, in his important work entitled *Geschichte der Beneficialwesens* (Erlangen, 1850, p. 440), takes pains to show the fictitious character of this narrative, grounding his argument on the fact that, in the division of Gaul among the Frankish kings, Anjou belonged, not to Theodebert, but to Childebert, and that this province only fell at a later period into the hands of a king of Austrasia of the same name, Theodebert II., who reigned from 596 to 602. But we can answer with Ruinart, that nothing is less certain than the exact limitation of the provinces with which the sons of Clovis constituted the different parts of their kingdoms, and nothing more strange than the subdivision of all the territory situated south of the Loire. Another learned contemporary who has devoted his attention to the origin of Frank royalty, Professor Leo, proves that Thierry, the father of Theodebert, and the eldest of the sons of Clovis, exercised a sort of sovereignty over the estates of his brothers, and that his possessions surrounded all parts of the patrimonies of the latter. — See *Des Deutschen Volkes Ursprung und Werden*, 1854, p. 353.

brated in the history of the Merovingians for his exploits in Aquitaine against the Visigoths, and in Italy against the imperial forces, consented very reluctantly to part with one of his principal officers, and only after having himself visited the new colony. He came with all the pomp which the race of Clovis were so prompt to borrow from the fallen empire; but, clothed in his purple as he was, as soon as he perceived Maur, the Frank king prostrated himself before the Roman monk, as Totila prostrated himself before Benedict, entreating the abbot to pray for him, and to inscribe his name among those of the brethren. He presented his young son to the community, desired that the monks who had come from Monte Cassino with the abbot might be specially pointed out to him, asked their names, and embraced them and also their brethren. Then he surveyed the monastic precincts, ate with the monks in the refectory, and before he went away, desired that the chief of his scribes should make out on the spot, and seal with his ring, the donation of an estate belonging to the crown, which he intended to bestow on the monastery. Florus afterwards obtained the king's consent to witness his profession as a monk. After having added new gifts to his first donation, the viscount freed and portioned twenty of his slaves; then, having laid his military sword-belt on the altar, he knelt before the king, who, at the request of the abbot, cut the first lock of his hair; the tonsure was then completed by the other nobles present. Before leaving the monastery the king desired to see his old friend in the monastic dress; he exhorted him to do honor to that new habit, as he had done honor to secular life, then threw himself into the arms of Florus and wept there before he withdrew, carrying with him the benediction of the abbot.[40]

Interview between Theodebert and St. Maur at Glanfeuil.

Thus the Frank king and the Benedictine became acquainted with each other, and these two forces which were to found France, to direct and represent her during long centuries, stood face to face for the first time.

Admitting even that this tale may have been embellished,

[40] "Regali indutus purpura humiliter prostratus. . . . Qui cum nos digito designasset, in parte nos stare præcipiens, intuebatur attentius, nomen unius cujusque sciscitans. . . . Ansebaldum, qui scriptoribus testamentorum regalium præerat . . . ut de ejus annulo regali firmaret more. . . . Cingulum militiæ . . . super altare mittens. . . . Rex primus de coma capitis ejus totondit. . . . Florum sibi amantissimum ad se deduci præcepit, qui . . . monachali jam indutus habitu . . . diutius in osculis ejus immoratur." — Faustus, *Vit. S. Mauri*, c. 49–52.

in its minute details, by the imagination of after ages, it is worthy of being remembered as a sort of type of those intimate and cordial relations which began to exist from that time between the princes of Germanic race and the monks, and which are to be found almost on every page of their double history.

III. — PREVIOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MEROVINGIANS AND THE MONKS.

God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. — 2 Tim. i. 7.

This was not, however, the first time that the Merovingians had met the monks on their way. By the side of bishops, who personified the gentle and strong majesty of the Church, and whose children the Franks had just declared themselves to be, they had everywhere discovered, sometimes isolated recluses, sometimes monks living in a community whose strange privations, painful labors, and irreproachable virtues bore eloquent witness to the moral grandeur of Christian doctrines. The life of these kings, divided between war and the chase, brought them perpetually in contact with those whom all the world agreed in calling men of God, whether in the towns and rural districts ravaged by their soldiers, or in the forests hunted by their hounds. In spite of all we have said regarding the strange and hateful mixture of deceit and ferocity, wild incontinence and savage pride, which characterized the Merovingian princes, in spite of the fatal alloy which Gallo-Roman corruption, immediately after their conversation and conquest, added to the traditional barbarity of the race, it is impossible to deny the sincerity of their faith, and the influence which Christian virtue and penitence almost always exercised upon them. They passed with a rapidity which now seems incomprehensible from the atrocious excesses of their native cruelty to passionate demonstrations of contrition and humility. After having directed massacres or executions which rank among the most odious recollections of history, we see them listening with respect, and pardoning without difficulty the warning of a bold chief, or still more frequently of a pontiff or monk. For it was almost always monks or bishops who had been trained in cloistral life, who drew from them, in the name of God, a tardy and incomplete homage to justice and humanity.

Clovis founds Micy, near Orleans. 508.

Clovis himself paid repeated tribute to these virtues. The foundation of several abbeys has been attributed to him, though without sufficient proof.[41] But one charter of his is received as authentic, in which a profession of his faith in the indivisible and co-substantial Trinity, which proves his title to be considered the sole Catholic king existing in Christendom, which was then wasted by Arianism, precedes a grant of land and an exemption from imposts in favor of a monastery near Orleans, which soon became celebrated under the name of Micy, and then of St. Mesmin. This last name was derived from Maximin, one of the leaders of the little colony of Arverne monks, whom Clovis established there under the direction of the holy priest Euspicius, who had gained his heart at the siege of Verdun, by his mission into the besieging camp itself to implore mercy for the Gallo-Roman insurgents in that town.[42] He had given them an estate belonging to the royal *fiscus* or treasury, situated at the point of the peninsula formed by the Loire and Loiret at the junction of their waters, in order, as his charter states, that these Religious should be no longer strangers and travellers among the Franks.[43]

Other monastic legends concerning Clovis.

A legend long popular in Touraine declares the fine abbatial Church of St. Julian, near Tours, to mark the spot where the conqueror of the Visigoths stopped to bestow his alms, when, on horseback and with the crown on his head, he came to offer thanksgivings to St. Martin for his victory at Vouillé.[44]

Another tradition, recorded by Gregory of Tours, shows still better the feeling which consoled and animated the inhab-

[41] Molosme, St. Michael of Tonnerre, Nesle, &c.

[42] *Vit. S. Maximini, abb. Miciac.*, n. 4 to 9. Ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 564, ed. Venet.

[43] "Inter Francos peregrini." — Bréquigny, who, in his great collection (*Diplomata Chartæ*, &c., t. i., Preface, p. 8; Paris, 1791, folio), disputes all the diplomas attributed to Clovis for Reomaus, St. Pierre-le-Vif, &c., acknowledges the authenticity of that given by Clovis to St. Euspicius and to St. Maximin for Micy. The memory of this famous abbey has been revived in our days by the secondary seminary of the diocese of Orleans, established at La Chapelle St. Mesmin, not far from the site of Micy. On the opposite shore of the Loire, by an example of respect for antiquity very rare among us, the grotto where the body of St. Maximin was deposited has been restored and preserved by the care of M. Collin, chief engineer of the navigation of the Loire, and has been since devoted to divine service, and inaugurated by M. Dupanloup, bishop of Orleans, 13th June, 1858.

[44] Martyrology of 1469, quoted by Salmon, *Recueil des Chroniques de Touraine*, p. 53.

itants of Gaul, when they saw their dreaded conquerors bow before the sanctity of monks of their own race. This tradition relates that, during the march of the army of Clovis across Poitou to encounter Alaric, a band of Franks attacked a monastery, governed by a holy monk named Maxentius,[45] from Agde in Septimania; one of the Barbarians had raised his sword to kill the abbot, when his arm was suddenly paralyzed, and his companions were struck with blindness around him. Clovis, when he heard of the miracle, hastened to the monk, and, on his knees, begged mercy for the assassins.[46] The spot where the victor of Syagrius and Alaric knelt before a Gallo-Roman monk, and acknowledged a force more invincible than all the Roman or Barbarian arms, was shown for several centuries in the church of the monastery.

Clovis and St. Maixent. 507.

But it was not always with such impunity that the monks were exposed to contact with their ferocious conquerors, and evil often fell upon them while representing religion, with all the benefits and progress that flowed from it, to the eyes of the sanguinary and covetous hordes, whose fury might sometimes be repressed by the power of a Clovis, but whose chiefs were ordinarily the first to give the example of violence. These Franks who were so zealous for orthodoxy, and who boasted of fighting for the Church against the Burgundians and Arian Visigoths, did not hesitate when their passions were inflamed to subject the most orthodox priests and monks to barbarous usage. Thus we see, in one of their invasions of Burgundy, a solitary of the famous monastery of the island Barbe, on the Saone near Lyons, given up to the most cruel tortures by a detachment of Franks who had invaded that sanctuary, called by some the most ancient in Gaul. His name was Leobin, and he had been a shepherd before he became a monk. All the other Religious had fled except himself and another old monk who, urged by the invaders to show them where the wealth of the monastery was hidden, answered that he did not know, but that Leobin was acquainted with everything. The Franks, finding that Leobin would not answer their questions, put him to the torture with an ingenious cruelty which seems to have been borrowed rather from Ori-

The monk Leobin tortured by the Franks.

[45] This monastery has become the town of St. Maixent (Deux Sèvres).

[46] "Qui locus in quo idem princeps ad pedes sancti viri jacuerat in eodem monasterio usque in hodiernum diem apparet." — *Act. SS.* Bolland., *d.* 25 *Junii*, p. 172. Compare Greg. Tur., *Hist.*, lib. ii. c. 37.

ental than Germanic habits. They tied cords tightly round his head, beat him upon the soles of his feet, plunged him over and over again into the water, drawing him out only when he was almost suffocated. The courageous monk resisted all these agonies without speaking. Then they left him more dead than alive. He recovered, however, and was called some years after to the episcopal see of Chartres, by Childebert, one of the sons of Clovis, who had himself led the attack to which the pious bishop had all but fallen victim.[47]

He became Bishop of Chartres. — 547-558.

Clovis had a sister named Albofled, who, baptized at the same time as himself, had embraced conventual life. She died soon after, and Clovis lamented her so deeply that St. Remy had to remind him of the duties of his royal charge. "There is no room," wrote the apostle of the Franks, "for lamenting that sister whose virginal flower spreads forth its perfume in the presence of God, and who has received a celestial crown as the reward of her virginity. My lord, chase this grief from your heart, your kingdom remains to you to be governed. You are the head of nations, and the weight of their government lies upon you." [48]

The sister and daughter of Clovis embrace religious life.

He had also a daughter called Theodechild, who also, as it is supposed, consecrated her virginity to God. Her existence can be traced only by some scanty lines in the works of Gregory of Tours and the other chronicles of the time. They permit us to salute her in passing as a sweet and consoling apparition amid the horrors and violence of the age in which she lived. She founded near the Gallo-Roman cathedral city of Sens a monastery in honor of St. Peter and St. Paul, in imitation of that which her father and mother had built near Paris, to the south of the Seine, and where St. Genevieve was buried. Theodechild established monks in this foundation, which since took the name of St. Pierre-le-Vif: she chose her burial-place

St. Pierre-le-Vif at Sens. — About 507.

[47] "Dum Francorum dura ferocitatis contra Burgundiones bella concitaret . . ." — *Vit. S. Leobini*, c. 5–14; ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. Clovis himself invaded Burgundy in 500; his sons in 523 and in 532. St. Leobin having become bishop in 547, it is probable that his adventure at the Ile-Barbe relates to the last of these invasions, directed by Clotaire and Childebert.

[48] "Sacrata non est lugenda, quæ fragrat in conspectu Domini flore virgineo, et corona tecta quam pro virginitate suscepit. . . . Dominus meus, repelle de corde tuo tristitiam . . . regnum sagacius gubernate. . . . Mœroris torpore discusso . . . manet vobis regnum administrandum. . . . Populorum caput estis et regimen sustinetis." — Ap. Labbe, *Concil.*, t. iv. p. 1268. Compare S. Greg. Tur., *Hist.*, ii. 31.

there, after having made a grant to them of all that she had possessed or acquired in France and Aquitaine — that is, on both sides of the Loire.[49] An act of generous pity on the part of the royal foundress worthily inaugurated the annals of this famous monastery. Basolus, who had been named Duke of Aquitaine by Gessalic, king of Aquitaine and the Visigoths, was made prisoner by Clovis in a last combat, and was conducted chained to Sens. While his guards led him to the dungeon where he expected to be put to death, he met Theodechild, the daughter of his conqueror, upon his way. She immediately resolved to beg the life and liberty of the captive. Clovis long resisted her entreaties, but yielded at length on condition that the vanquished chief should be sent to the monastery which his daughter had just established, and should have his head shaven and become a monk. Basolus appears to have adopted his new profession willingly, for he gave to St. Peter all the estates he possessed in Auvergne, and thus founded the monastery and town of Mauriac in the mountains of Cantal.[50]

Monasteries of Auvergne; Basolus.

These monasteries of Auvergne and elsewhere, where the victors and vanquished often met, were already an asylum for all kinds of unfortunate persons. Gregory of Tours has preserved to us the memory of a young Arverne slave, Portianus, who, flying from the severity of his master, took refuge in a monastery: the Barbarian pursued and seized him, but, being suddenly struck with blindness, restored the fugitive to the sanctuary in order to obtain the cure he desired. The slave became a monk and then abbot, and governed the monastery, from which he came forth one day to confront and reprimand the French

Portian.

About 532.

[49] "Monachos ut, sub abbatis imperio, Deo cunctis diebus deservirent. . . . Quidquid de possesso seu de acquisito." This testament is to be found among the collections of Odorannus, a learned monk of St. Pierre-le-Vif in the eleventh century, published by Cardinal Mai, in vol. ix. of his *Spicilegium Romanum*, p. 62. Fortunatus, the poet of the Merovingian princesses, wrote the epitaph of Theodechild. Odorannus quotes another epitaph as follows: —

"Hunc *regina* locum monachis construxit ab imo
Theuchildis rebus nobilitando suis.
Cujus nunc, licet hoc corpus claudatur in antro,
Spiritus astrigero vivit in axe Deo.
Implorans rectis pastoribus euge beatum
Det sapientibus hinc neumata digna Deus!"

[50] "Mauriac is now an under-prefecture of Cantal. This monastery was restored in 1100 by Raoul of Escorailles, who placed nuns there, stipulating that all the abbesses should be chosen from his descendants." — Branche, *Monastères d'Auvergne*, p. 63. Compare Mabillon, *Annal.*, lib. vi. c. 30.

king Thierry, son of Clovis, in his destroying march through Auvergne.[51] After his death, the abbey, which his sanctity had made illustrious, took his name, and transmitted it to the existing town of St. Pourçain.[52]

The monk and the sons of Clovis.

It is to Gregory of Tours again that we owe the knowledge how Thierry, king of Metz, the first-born of Clovis, and chief of these Ripuarian Franks who formed the kingdom of Austrasia, father of that Theodebert who was the protector of St. Maurus, received humbly the free remonstrances which the abbot Nizier addressed to him publicly against the immorality of his life. Far from having any grudge against him, this king elevated him to the episcopal see of Treves. He sent several of his principal officers to the monastery to bring the abbot to Treves. At the last stage from the town, these lords turned their horses loose in the midst of the harvest. At this sight the Abbot Nizier said to them indignantly, "Withdraw your horses immediately from the harvest of the poor, or I will excommunicate you." "What!" said the Franks, amazed at the boldness of the monk, "thou art not yet a bishop, and already thou threatenest us with excommunication?" "The king," said the monk, "has brought me from my monastery to make me a bishop: let the will of God be done; but as for the will of the king, it shall not be done when it is set upon evil, at least while I can hinder it." And thereupon he himself drove the horses out of the field which they were destroying. During all his episcopate, King Thierry and his son Theodebert, who were of dissolute habits, like all the Merovingians, had to bear the apostolical zeal of Nizier. He always said, "I am ready to die for justice." He also braved the terrible Clotaire, to whom he refused the sacraments, and whose death alone delivered him from the exile to which he had been sentenced.[53]

Thierry I. and the Abbot Nizier.

637.

Clodimir, king of Orleans, the second of the sons of Clovis, was similarly confronted by the noble form of a monk, Avitus, abbot of that monastery of Micy, in the Orleannais, which his father had founded, who appeared before him when, on the eve of undertaking his second

Clodimir and the Abbot Avitus.

[51] Greg. Turon., *Vit. Patr.*, c. 5.

[52] A district country town in Allier.

[53] "Expellite quantocius equos vestros a segete pauperis, alioquin removebo vos a communione mea. . . . Quænam est hæc causa quam loqueris? Adhuc cum episcopalem apicem non es adeptus, et jam. . . . Fiat voluntas Dei: nam et regis voluntas in omnibus malis, me obsistente, non adimplebitur. . . . Libenter moriar pro justitia." — Greg. Turon., *De Vitis Patrum*, c. 17.

campaign against the Burgundians, he desired to disembarrass himself of his prisoner, King Sigismund, who had vainly sought a refuge in his beloved cloister of Agaune. The monk came to remind him of the rights of pity, and to predict the sentence of divine justice. "Oh king!" said the abbot, "think of God: if thou givest up thy project, if thou art merciful to these captives, God will be with thee, and thou shalt conquer again; but if thou slayest them, thou and thine shall meet the same fate."[54] Clodimir answered, "It is a fool's advice to bid a man leave his enemy behind him." He killed Sigismund, his wife, and two children, and threw them into a well. But the prediction of Avitus was accomplished. Clodimir was vanquished and slain; his head, fixed at the end of a spear, was carried in triumph along the Burgundian ranks. The fate of his children is known; how his brothers Childebert and Clotaire, fortifying themselves by an expression which escaped from their mother Clotilde, who had said that she would rather see her grandchildren dead than *shaven*,[55] massacred the two eldest; and how the third escaped their knife only by receiving the monastic tonsure and the name of St. Cloud, one of the best-known monastic names in our history.

St. Cloud.

[54] "Si respiciens Deum emendaveris consilium tuum, ut hos homines interfici non patiaris, erit Deus tecum." — Greg. Tur., *Hist.*, lib. iii. c. 5.

[55] It is probable that this had nothing to do with the monastic tonsure, but simply concerned the shortening of that long hair which was, with the Franks, as it is with the peasant of Lower Brittany at the present time, the sign of freedom, and was a special attribute of the Merovingians, and token of their dynasty and hereditary right. "Solemne est Francorum regibus nunquam tonderi. . . . Cæsaries toto decenter eis in humeros propendet." — Agathiæ *Histor.*, ap. Thierry, *Récits Méroving.*, t. ii. p. 17. "A Merovingian prince could suffer this temporary loss in two different ways: either the hair was cut in the manner of the Franks, — that is to say, to the top of the neck, — or cut very short in the Roman fashion; and this kind of degradation, more humiliating than the other, was generally accompanied by the ecclesiastical tonsure." — *Ibid.* Moreover, the kings and grandees of the Merovingian era learned early and practised often the odious custom of imposing forced vocations on the dispossessed princes, and inflicting the tonsure upon them against their will. The history of Merovée, son of Chilperic, and husband of Brunehaut, degraded by the tonsure at the order of Fredegonde, is universally known. Another example, still more striking, is that of Thierry III., king of Neustria, deposed in 670 by the great rebels against the tyranny of Ebroin, and succeeded by his brother Childeric II. His brother asked him what should be done to him; he answered, "What they will: unjustly deposed, I wait the judgment of the King of heaven." "Tunc ad monasterium S. martyris Dionysii residere est jussus ibique est salvatus, donec crinem quem amputaverant enutriret: et Deus cœli, quem se judicem est habere professus, feliciter postmodum ipsum permisit regnare." — *Anon. Æduen. Vit. S. Leodegarii*, c. 3.

Childebert the friend of the monks.

These ferocious assassins nevertheless yielded in their turn to the influence of the lessons and examples given by the monks. Childebert especially would have been the monastic king *par excellence*, could we believe all the legends, which probably concentrate in him various anecdotes relative to other princes of the same name or race. Some of these are worthy of recollection from their authentic individual characteristics, or from the light they throw on contemporary history. Such a tale is that which informs us how the first king of Paris, when crossing Berry to meet the Visigoths, paused at the door of the cell occupied by the monk Eusice, and offered to him fifty pieces of gold. "Why do you give this to me?" said the old recluse; "give it to the poor; it is enough for me to be able to pray to God for my sins. However, march on, you will be victorious, and then you can do all you would." Childebert bent his heavy locks under the hand of the solitary to receive his blessing, and promised, if his prophecy was fulfilled, to return and build him a church. The prediction was fulfilled, and the king kept his promise. After he had defeated the Visigoths and taken Narbonne their capital, he built,[55] upon the banks of the Cher, a monastery and church, in which the solitary was buried. This donation was increased by the offering made by the noble Vulfin, one of the principal Franks of the army, who, in the distribution of rewards made by Childebert at the end of his campaign, having asked and obtained a grant of crown lands, or what was already called an *honor*, upon the same banks of the Cher, hastened to pay this tribute to the holy monk by whose fame he had been fascinated.[57]

His connection with the Abbot Eusice, in Berry.

This Eusice or Eusitius must have been, according to the evidence of his name, of Roman or Gallo-Roman origin, like all the other monks whom we have noted up to this point; but Childebert entertained friendly relations of the same kind with another monk whose name, Marculph, points him out as a Frank, and who was

And with the Frankish abbot Marculph, in Neustria.

[56] At Selles in Berry, near Romorantin. "Quod mihi ista profers? . . . Vade et victoriam obtinebis, et quod volueris ages." — Greg. Turon., *De Glor. Confess.*, c. 82. "Crinigeram cervicem sancti manibus . . . inclinat." — Dom Bouquet, iii. 129. Eusice began his career as a monk at Perrecy, in Burgundy (*Patriciacum*), which at a later period became one of the most celebrated priories of the Benedictine order.

[57] "Vulfinus ejusdem generis vir nobilissimus . . . remunerationis suæ præmium . . . præstolabatur . . . nihil petiit sibi dari nisi super Chari fluvium quem rex habebat honorem." — *Vit. S. Eusicii*, ap. Labbe, *Nov. Bibl. MSS.*, ii. 375.

the first of all the holy monks whose name betrayed that origin.[58] He was of a rich and powerful race established in the country of Bayeux, and the union of the proud independence of the Frank with the rigorous austerity of the monk is everywhere apparent in the narrative of his life. He had devoted the first half of his existence to preaching the faith to the inhabitants of Cotentin; from thence we see him set out, mounted on his ass, to meet King Childebert on the day of a great festival, in the midst of his feudal lords, and asking of him a grant of land on which to build a monastery where the king and the commonwealth of the Franks might be prayed for. It was not the habitual adulation of the Romans of the Lower Empire which he used to gain the monarch's ear. "Mercy and peace to thee, from Jesus Christ," he said, "illustrious prince: thou art seated on the throne of royal majesty, but thou shouldst not forget that thou art mortal, and that pride must not make thee despise thy fellow-creatures. Recall to thy mind that text of the wise man: 'Men have made thee a prince; be not exalted, but be as one of them in the midst of them.' Be just even in thy clemency, and mix pity even with thy justice." Childebert granted his request. But scarcely had he accomplished this first foundation, when, for the better enjoyment of the charms of solitude, Marculph took refuge in an island on the coast of Brittany, inhabited only by a handful of fishers. A numerous band of Saxon pirates having made a descent upon this island, the poor Bretons came trembling and kneeling to the Frank monk. "Be of good courage," he said to them; "if you trust my counsel, take your weapons, march against your enemy, and the God who overthrew Pharaoh will fight for you." They listened to him, put the Saxons to flight, and a second foundation marks the spot of that victory achieved over the piratical pagans by innocence and faith, inspired by the courage of a monk.[59]

Marculph puts the Saxon pirates to flight.

[58] Among the holy monks whose name indicates a German origin, I see before Marculph or Marcoul, who died in 558, only Théodoric or Thierry, who died in 533, a disciple of St. Remy, the first great abbot of the great monastery near Reims, which retains his name, and from which William of St. Thierry, the annalist of the twelfth century, derives his.

[59] "Ex nobilissimis ditissimisque christianissimis Bajocassinis civibus exortus. . . . Asello cui cedere consueverat ascenso. . . . Cum Rex multa suorum procerum turba. . . . Licet in solio majestatis sedeas, tamen te unum mortalium esse considerans. . . . Tibi subditis et cum justitia parcis, et cum pietate corrigis. . . . Pro tua totiusque reipublicæ salute sedulo oraturi. . . . Piratæ . . . ex inexhaustis scaturiginibus gentis Saxonicæ prorumpentes. . . . Si meis vultis acquiescere monitis, arma constanter

Emigration of British monks into Armorica.

These Saxons who troubled the solitude of the holy Marculph in his island had long invaded and sacked Great Britain. To escape from their bloody yoke an army of British monks, guiding an entire tribe of men and women, freemen and slaves, embarked in vessels not made of wood, but of skins sewn together,[60] singing or rather howling, under their full sails, the lamentations of the Psalmist,[61] and came to seek an asylum in Armorica, and make for themselves another country. This emigration lasted more than a century; and threw a new, but equally Celtic population into that portion of Gaul which Roman taxation and Barbarian invasion had injured least, and where the ancient Celtic worship had retained most vitality.

460-550.

Persistence of paganism in Armorica.

With the exception of three or four episcopal cities, almost all the Armorican peninsula was still pagan in the sixth century. All the symbols and rites, the myths and arcanas of paganism seemed to be concentrated in that wild and misty country, where the avenues and circles of erect stones, the *dolmens* and *menhirs*, rose, sometimes amid immense forests of oak and holly, or moors covered by impenetrable thickets of furze, sometimes upon the high granite rocks of that coast, rent and hollowed out by

capessite. . . . Pro vobis ipse pugnabit, qui quondam Pharaonem," &c. — *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, tom. i. pp. 120, 124. This island, called *Agnus* or *Agna* in the two lives of St. Marculph, is probably that of Harme or Herms, near Guernsey. The translation of the relics of St. Marcoul, in the ninth century, proved the foundation of the great monastery of Corbéni (*Corpus Benedictum*), between Laon and Reims, where the kings of France went to pray after their coronation and obtained power to cure scrofula, saying, "The king touches thee, God cures thee."

[60] "Quin et Armoricus piratam Saxona tractus
Sperabat; cui pelle salum sulcare Britannum
Ludus, et assuto glaucum mare findere lembo."

SID. APOLLIN., *Paneg. ad Avitum*, v. 369.

Festus Avienus, who lived at the end of the fourth century, in his curious poem, entitled *Ora Maritima*, speaks also of these leather boats used by the British: —

"Navigia junctis semper aptant pellibus,
Corioque vastum sæpe percurrunt salum."

Edit. Panckoucke, p. 110.

Legendery lore has sometimes transformed them into troughs of stone, which, after having been used as beds by the holy missionaries during their solitary life in Great Britain, served them as skiffs to cross the British Channel, and land in Armorica. See the legends of St. Ninnoc and St. Budoc, in the *Propre* or special prayers of the ancient dioceses of Dol and Leon. ALBERT LE GRAND, *Vie des SS. de Bretagne*, ed. Miorcec de Kerdanet, 1839.

[61] "Cum ululatu magno ceu celeusmatis vice, hoc modo sub velorum sinibus cantantes: *Dedisti nos tanquam oves escarum.*" — GILDAS, *De Excidio Britanniæ.*

the unwearied ocean tides which beat upon it from the north, south, and west. In one of the isles of this extremity of Gaul, Homer and Plutarch have placed the prison where Saturn was held captive by his son Jupiter, under the guard of the giant Briareus. Here, too, according to most of the poets, was the dwelling-place of the genii and the heroes, the garden of the Hesperides and the Elysian fields. Elsewhere, but still in the same archipelago of almost inaccessible islands, the Druidesses celebrated at night, and by torchlight, those mysteries, which, like those of Eleusis and Samothrace, were shut out from the approach of man, and filled with terror the soul of the boatman who beheld them from afar. Human sacrifices, and especially those of children, were practised here, as among the Carthaginians, in honor of Saturn.[62] Other priestesses, vowed like the Roman Vestals to perpetual virginity, and, like the German Velleda, invested with the gift of prophecy, raised and calmed the sea at their pleasure, cured diseases, and foretold future events to those who were bold enough to consult them in their island of Sein, situated at the furthest point of Armorica, upon that frightful coast of Cornouaille, bristling with rocks, in that bay which is still called the *Bay of the Dead*, and where popular tradition sees the skeletons of the shipwrecked wandering by night asking a shroud and a grave.[63]

Poetic traditions.

Tradition has never failed to people the coasts of Armorica with phantoms. It was there, according to Claudian, that Ulysses offered libations of blood to the manes of his fathers, troubling the repose of the dead; there that the husbandman hears incessantly the plaintive accents and faint sound made by the manes whose flight agitates the air, and where pale phantoms wander before his terrified eyes.

> "Est locus extremum qua pandit Gallia littus,
> Oceani prætentus aquis, ubi fertur Ulysses,
> Sanguine libato, populum movisse silentem.
> Illic umbrarum tenui stridore volantum
> Flebilis auditur questus, simulacra coloni
> Pallida defunctasque vident migrare figuras."[64]

This tradition lasted till the end of the sixth century, and extended to the extremities of the Roman world. Procopius,

[62] See the legend of St. Riok.

[63] Artemidorus, apud Strabon., lib. iv. p. 198; Pomponius Mela, lib. iii. c. 6; Hersart de la Villemarqué, *Chants Populaires de la Bretagne*, t. ii., *La Fiancée en Enfer*.

[64] *In Rufinum*, lib. i. v. 123.

the contemporary of the sons of Clovis, narrates that the fishermen who inhabited these coasts had been exempted by the conquering Franks from the payment of tribute, because they were obliged to convey the souls of the defunct to Great Britian. "Towards midnight," says the Byzantine historian, "some one knocks at their door; they are called in a low voice; they rise and hasten to the shore; they find there strange boats, in which they see no one, but which they must row across the sea; and these boats are so full of invisible passengers that they seem ready to sink, and are scarcely a finger-breadth above the level of the water. In less than an hour the journey is accomplished, though in their own boats they could scarcely do it in a night. Arrived at the end, the vessels are so entirely emptied that you can see their keel. All remain invisible; but the sailors hear a voice which calls the travelling souls one by one, addressing each by the title which it has borne, and adding to this the name of its father, or, if a woman, of her husband." [65]

Upon this soil, long adopted by legendary poetry as its special possession, a swarm of monastic missionaries descended at the head of a population already Christian. They came to ask shelter from their brethren, issued from the same race and speaking the same language. The leaders of the British monks who disembarked with their army of disciples upon the Armorican shore, undertook to pay for the hospitality they received by the gift of the true faith, and they succeeded. They gave their name and worship to their new country. They preached Christianity in the language common to all the Celtic races, and resembling that which is still spoken by the peasants of Lower Brittany. They implanted in the Armorican Britain, in this Brittany of ours, that faith which remains so firmly rooted there. "The sun," says a Breton monk of the seventeenth century, apostrophizing one of these prophets from beyond the sea, "has never lighted a country where, since you banished idolatry, the true faith has been held with more constant and unchanging faithfulness. For thirteen centuries no kind of infidelty has stained the language by means of

Conversion of Armorica by the British emigrants.

[65] "Intempesta nocte . . . se ad opus obscura voce acciri audiunt . . . apprehendunt remos et naves sentiunt tot vectoribus onustas ut ad summam usque tabulam immersæ. . . . Nullum vident nec navigantem nec navi egredientem: solum asserunt audire se vocem, quæ vectorum singulorum nomina tradere excipientibus. . . . Si quæ feminæ . . . viros . . . nominatim inclamant." — Procop., *De Bello Gothico*, lib. iv. c. 20.

which you preached Jesus Christ, and the man has yet to be born who has heard a Breton preach in the Breton tongue any other than the Catholic faith."[66]

This peaceful conquest was not made without resistance. The British monks encountered enemies upon the soil of Gaul almost as terrible as those from whose persecution they fled. Celtic paganism defended itself desperately. The bards attempted to rouse the people against the strangers who audaciously brought a new religion into the inviolable sanctuary of Druidism. The prophetic menaces launched by one of these poets of the old religion against the new apostles has often been quoted: "A day comes when the men of Christ shall be pursued, when they shall be hunted like deer. They shall die by bands and battalions. Then the mill-wheel shall grind small; the blood of the monks shall serve as water to turn it."[67]

Resistance of the pagan bards.

Thirteen centuries passed before new pagans, a thousand times more atrocious and less excusable than the compatriots of the bard Gwenchlan, appeared to verify that prophecy. But in olden time it seemed to die out under the success and blessings with which the British monks had covered Armorica.

They also carried with them their poetry, which shortly superseded the Druidical poetry, purifying without effacing it. For they also, faithful to the immemorial traditions of the Celtic race, had bards in their ranks. The famous Taliesin, who took the title of prince of the bards, prophets, and Druids of the West, and who is supposed to have been converted by the monk Gildas, accompanied them into Armorica.[68] But bards who have since taken their place among the Saints were pointed out among this number. Such was Sulio, or Ysulio, who, while still a child playing in the gardens of his father, the Lord of Powys, heard monks passing, harp in hand, singing the praises of God, and was so fascinated with the beauty of their hymns

Monastic bards.

Ysulio.

[66] "Le soleil n'a jamais éclairé de canton où ayt paru une plus constante et invariable fidélité dans la vraye foy, depuis que vous en avez banni l'idolastrie. Il y a treize siècles qu'aucune espèce d'infidélité n'a souillé la langue qui vous a servy d'organe pour prescher Jésus-Christ, et il est à naistre qui ayt vu un Breton bretonnant prescher une autre religion que la Catholique." — Father Maunoir, *Epistre au glorieux St. Corentin*, 1659.

[67] Hersart de la Villemarqué, *Chants Populaires de la Bretagne*, vol. i. pp. 20, 38.

[68] Ingomar, *Vit. Judicaelis*, apud D. Morice, *Hist. de Bretagne*, proofs, vol. i. Compare La Villemarqué, p. 9, and Kerdanet, editor of Albert le Grand, p. 218.

that he followed them to learn how to compose and sing these noble songs. His brothers hastened to announce his flight to their father, who sent thirty armed men, with orders to slay the abbot and bring back his son. But the child had already gone to Armorica and found refuge in the monastery of which, at a later period, he was prior.[69]

The blind Herve.

Such was also Herve, whose name ought to take place among the sweetest recollections of Christian poetry. He was the son of the bard Hyvernion, who had appeared among the numerous minstrels whom the Merovingian kings loved to collect round their table.[70] This island bard had charmed King Childebert; "he was," says the old Breton legend, "so perfect a musician and composer of ballads and songs."[71] He had come to Armorica to marry a young orphan of Leon, whom an angel had showed him in a dream, saying to him, "You shall meet her to-morrow, upon your way, near the fountain; her name is Rivanonn." He met her accordingly; she was of the same profession as himself, and sang, "Although I am but a poor flower on the waterside, it is I who am called the Little Queen of the Fountain." He married her, and of this marriage was born a blind child, whom his parents named Herve (that is, *bitter*), and who, from the age of seven, went about the country seeking alms and singing the hymns composed by his mother. The blind orphan was afterwards initiated by his uncle into cenobitical life, and was placed at the head of the school adjoining his monastery, where he could put in practice the aphorism which Breton tradition ascribes to him, "*It is better to instruct a little child than to gather wealth for him;*"[72] and where he taught his pupils songs, of which the modern Breton still retains some trace in the following childish version: —

"Approach, my little children; come and hear a new song which I have composed expressly for you; take pains to remember it entirely.

"When you awake in your bed, offer your heart to the

[69] Dom Lobineau, *Vie des Saints de Bretagne*, p. 253; La Villemarqué, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[70] The Italian Fortunatus has preserved to us the remembrance of these concerts, where, with lyre in hand, he took his part, whilst "the Barbarian," says he, "played on the harp, the Greek on the instrument of Homer, and the Breton on the Celtic rote." — La Villemarqué, *Légende Celtique*, p. 232.

[71] Albert le Grand, *Vie des Saints de Bretagne*, ed. Kerdanet, p. 313.

[72] The following is another of his aphorisms: — "He who does not answer to the rudder must answer to the rocks."

good God, make the sign of the cross, and say with faith, hope, and love:

"Say: My God, I give thee my heart, my body, and my soul; make me to be a good man, or else to die before my time.

"When you see a raven fly, think that the devil is as black and as wicked; when you see a little white dove fly, think that your angel is as sweet and as white."

After the conversion of the country, the missionary bishops, compatriots of the father of Herve, would have drawn him from his retreat to confer the priesthood upon him, and to give him a seat in their synods. But he always preferred his little monastery hidden in the woods. Although blind, he had himself been the architect of his little church, the care of which he intrusted to a very young girl, his niece or cousin, educated by his mother, and named Christina, "a Christian in name as in fact,"[73] whom the Breton legend, placing her amid the disciples of the saint, compares to a little white dove among the crows.[74] Three days before his death, when secluded in the church which he had built, he was thrown into an ecstasy. The eyes of the poor blind man opened to contemplate the heaven over his head, and he began to sing a last song, which is still repeated in his country: —

"I see heaven opened; heaven, my country, I would fly to it. . . . I see there my father and mother in glory and beauty; I see my brethren, the men of my own country. Choirs of angels, supported by wings, float round their heads like so many bees in a flowery field."

The third day after this vision, he told Christina to make his bed, not as usually, but with a stone for the pillow and ashes for the couch. "When the black angel shall come to seek me, let him find me lying upon ashes." Christina, while she obeyed, said to him, "My uncle, if you love me, ask God that I may follow you without delay, as the boat follows the current." Her prayer was granted. At the moment when Herve expired, the little Christina, "throwing herself at his feet, died there also."[75] Herve, the blind monk, continues to our own day the patron of mendicant singers, who still chant his legend in Breton verse; and there has long been shown, in a little church in Lower Brittany,[76] a worm-eaten

[73] Albert le Grand, p. 321, ed. Miorcec.
[74] La Villemarqué, p. 279.
[75] Albert le Grand, p. 321.
[76] At St. Jean-Keran, parish of Tréflaouénan.

oaken cradle, in which the bard and his poet-wife, whom God made the parents of Herve, put him to sleep with their songs.[77] This poetry is surely of as much value as that of Claudian and the Druids.

But we must leave the too attractive regions of poetry to return to the domain of history, which is often, and here especially, to be distinguished with difficulty from that of the legend. Without entering into details of the immigration of these Bretons into Armorica, it is enough to say that fifty years after their appearance the Gospel reigned in the peninsula. Monks, either cenobites or solitary, held the place of all the other clergy for several centuries, and exercised over the soul and imagination of the Armorican people a priestly empire which still continues. Innumerable monasteries rose on all the principal points of the territory, especially on the sea-coast. Among those which date back to this age, we must note Rhuys, which was afterwards made illustrious by becoming the retreat of Abelard. It was founded at that time upon the peninsula of Morbihan, by one of the most distinguished British emigrants, the Abbot Gildas, called *the Wise*, and this abbey reckoned among its monks the Saxon Dunstan, who had been carried away from his native island by pirates, and became, under the name of Goustan, the special patron of sailors, as is shown by the verses still sung by the sailors' wives of Croisic: —

Armorican monasteries.

"St. Goustan
Notre ami,
Ramenez nos maris:
St. Goustan
Notre amant,
Ramenez nos parents."

At the extreme point of the peninsula and of Gaul, on the height of the promontory so fitly named Finisterre, rose an abbey in honor of St. Matthew the Evangelist, whose head had been stolen from Egypt by the Armorican navigators, and which long bore the name of St. Matthew of the Land's End. The terrible rocks at its

St. Matthew of the Land's End.

[77] This beautiful legend of St. Herve, which is so popular in Bretagne, formerly related with charming simplicity, from the ancient Breton breviaries, by the Dominican Albert de Morlaix (1636), and reproduced after him by the Bollandists, in volume v. of June, p. 365, has been recently revised, with as much taste as learning, by the Viscount Hersart de la Villemarqué, member of the Institute, in his *Légende Celtique* (St. Brieuc, 1859). To this is added the Breton version of the legend in verse, and some poems attributed to the saint.

feet are still called the Monks, and an archipelago of neighboring islands has received the Breton name of Aber-Beniguet (or Benedict), in memory, perhaps, of the patriarch of the monks of the West. Those of St. Matthew kept up a lighthouse for the safety of mariners in these dangerous seas, opposite that terrible strait of the Raz, which no man, according to the Breton saying, ever passed without fear or grief, and which has inspired the well known distich: "My God, help me to cross the Raz, for my boat is so little, and the sea is so great!" [78]

Monastic school of Landevenec.

But the most ancient and celebrated of all these sanctuaries was that of Landevenec, which became the most active centre for the extension of Christianity, as well as of manual and literary labor, in Western Gaul. Its founder was Guennolé, born in Armorica of an emigrant father, who, after having passed three years upon a rock beaten by the waves, chose for his disciples a wooded site hidden in a creek of the road of Brest, with an exposure towards the rising sun, sheltered from the terrible west wind, where the sea sighed at the feet of delicious gardens. His biographer has preserved to us the impression made upon the Breton monks by this dwelling-place, which appeared a paradise to them after the bleak and cold coasts where they had been hitherto established. "One could not die there," he says; and, in order that the Religious might see the end of their pilgrimage, Guennolé had to change their habitation to a site further off, but still to the east, where death was restored to its rights, but where, for long, the monks died only according to their age.[79]

The name of Guennolé continues popular in Brittany, like that of many other holy abbots, come from beyond seas, or

[78] Albert le Grand, pp. 203 and 209. Compare *Vie de St. Tanneguy*, p. 771, who founded this abbey, and is supposed to have been one of the family of Chastel, of which Tanneguy du Chastel was the great representative in the fifteenth century.

[79] "Locus erat amœnissimus, ab omni vento intangibilis nisi ab orientali, velut quidam paradisus ad ortum solis conspicuus. . . . Primum per annos singulos in flores et germina prorumpens, ultima folia amittens . . . hortus omnigeno florum colore decoratus. . . . In eo ubi erant loco mori non poterant, licet fierent seniores. Rogato itaque super his S. Guingaleo, transierunt in alium locum ad ortum solis. . . . Extunc vero inceperunt assumi a Domino e senioribus patres, qui primi erant." — Gurdestan, *Vita S. Winevaloci*, ap. Bolland., t. i. Martii, pp. 259, 260. It is supposed that Guennolé had been educated by St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, and that the rule followed at Landevenec was that of St. Columba, or Colomb-Kill, of which there shall be further mention. The Benedictine rule was only introduced there under Louis le Debonnaire.

born in Armorica of emigrant parents. It is impossible to enumerate their works.[80] Let us only state that the principal communities formed by these monastic missionaries were soon transformed into bishoprics. Such, especially, was Dol, destined to become the ecclesiastical metropolis of Armorica, and founded by Samson, perhaps the most illustrious among the numerous apostles of the British emigration. Samson of Dol, and his six suffragans, all monks, missionaries and bishops like himself — namely, Paul of Leon, Tugdual of Treguier, Corentin of Quimper, Paterne of Vannes, Brieuc and Malo, of the two dioceses which have taken and retained their names — have been sometimes called the Seven Saints of Brittany. An anecdote, told of the Bishop Paterne, may be quoted as a curious example of the subordination of the suffragans to their metropolitan: Having received at Vannes the letter of St. Samson, convoking a provincial synod, "as he was taking off his boots, having still a boot upon one foot, he read it on the moment, and, incontinently getting to horse, followed the messengers, and presented himself at the synod with one boot!"[81] Paterne, as his name indicates, was the only one of these saints who was not of insular British race, as Vannes was the only diocese among the seven which did not owe its origin to a monastery of British emigrants.[82]

Monasteries transformed into bishoprics.

Dol.

The Seven Saints of Brittany, monks and bishops.

Although Armorica, thus converted and repeopled by British emigrants, had never been entirely conquered by the Franks, and was governed by the native and independent Counts of Vannes, Cornouaille, Leon, and Treguier, it recognized in some degree the supremacy of Childebert, whose share of the territories of Clovis extended farthest to the west.

This incomplete and ephemeral supremacy of the Frank kings,[83] which was afterwards re-established with difficulty

[80] This is so much the less to be regretted, as the subject has been nobly treated by M. de la Borderie, in his *Discours sur les Saints de Bretagne*, at the Congress of Lorient, October 2, 1848. He has collected there the best part of the varied and instructive details interspersed through the lives of the saints published in the *Acta SS.* by Mabillon and by the Bollandists. The verdict of the latter upon all the Breton legends ought not, however, to be omitted: "Ad stuporem magis quam ad imitationem collecta." — Tom. vi. Junii, p. 572.

[81] Albert le Grand, p. 248.

[82] Nantes and Rennes were of Gallo-Roman origin, and dependencies of the metropolis of Tours.

[83] "Francorum quidem regibus cætera subditi, at semper vacui tributo,"

by Dagobert and Louis the Debonnaire, seems to have been specially recognized and appealed to by the British missionaries. Tugdual, abbot and founder of Treguier, was raised to the episcopate only with the consent of Childebert, in whose court he was at the time of his election. The same was the case in respect to Paul Aurelian, first bishop of Leon, and recognized as such by Childebert, upon the express request of the count of the province.[84] Finally, the metropolitan Samson, being still only abbot of Dol, had to interfere in his own person with Childebert to obtain the deliverance of one of the native princes, who had been robbed of his inheritance and imprisoned by a tyrannical lieutenant of the Frank king.[85] Childebert, in spite of the violent resistance of the queen, whose antrustion this officer was, granted the prayer of the British missionary, and overwhelmed him with gifts and honors. He had even, according to tradition, placed in perpetuity, under the sway of the monastery of Dol, various of the Channel islands, among others that of Jersey, then deserted, and which has since, thanks to monastic culture, become a marvel of fertility and agricultural wealth, with a population six times more dense than that of France.

Their intercourse with Childebert.

By one of those contrasts so frequent in the history of the Merovingians, the Queen Ultrogoth, whom the legend of St. Samson represents as furious against the monastic missionary, is extolled by others as the faithful coadjutrice of the monks.[86] She is always associated by the gratitude of monks and believers with the memory of her husband, for having joined with him in founding, at the gates of Paris, the great monastery, afterwards so celebrated under the name of St. Germain-des-Prés. This church, which appears to have been one of the finest monuments of the Merovingian age, the organs and painted glass

Foundation of St. Germain-des-Prés by Childebert and Ultrogoth.

says Procopius in the passage quoted above on the inhabitants of the seashore.

[84] Bolland., t. ii. Mart., p. 119. "The holy Abbot Armel, one of the apostles of Lower Brittany, lived for seven years in the neighborhood of Childebert." — *Propr. Venetense*, ap. Albert le Grand, p. 523.

[85] "Dicunt ei injustum super eos, ac violentum, externumque judicem venisse." — Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 167. It is this officer who is called in the legends of S. Samson, S. Juval, S. Leonor, S. Tugdual, and S. Herve, *Conomor* or *Kon-mor;* that is to say, the *Great Chief*. He governed Domnonia, which comprised almost all Armorica, and was taken into the private service of Queen Ultrogoth, or, as the Franks say, into her *trust*. Compare Dom Lobineau, *Saints de Bretagne*, pp. 59, 91, 94, 105, 111, ed. of 1725.

[86] "Adjutrix fidelis monachorum." — *Ann. Bened.*, lib. v. c. 43.

of which, two beautiful creations of Catholic art,[87] were even then admired, had first been built by Childebert in honor of the martyr St. Vincent, whose tunic he had carried off from the Arian Visigoths at the time of his victorious invasion of Spain. He bestowed it upon the monks with the consent of the Bishop of Paris, Germain, himself a monk, and formerly abbot of St. Symphorian of Autun.

Exchange of agricultural products between the Parisian and Breton abbeys.

"One day," says the Breton legend, "the Abbot of Dol and the Bishop of Paris talked together about their monasteries. . . . St. Samson said that his monks were such good managers, and so careful of their beehives, that besides the honey, of which they had an abundant supply, they had more wax than they could use in the church during the whole year; but that the country not being fit for the growth of vines, they had a great dearth of wine. And we, on the contrary, said St. Germain, have vineyards in abundance, and a much greater quantity of wine than is wanted for the supply of the monastery; but we are obliged to buy wax for the church. If it pleases you, we will give you every year the tenth part of our wine, and you shall furnish us with wax to light our church. Samson accepted the offer, and the two monasteries mutually accommodated each other during the life of the saints."[88]

Popularity of St. Germain, monk and bishop.

The Parisian abbey afterwards received the name of St. Germain, who continued always a monk in the exercise of his episcopal charge,[89] and who himself exempted the new monastery from episcopal jurisdiction. As long as he lived he exercised the most salutary influence over the Merovingian kings. He consequently became one of the most popular saints that the monastic order has given to the Church; and the Parisians long narrated, among other tales of his inexhaustible charity, how, "esteeming the voice of the poor more than the gift of the king," he had sold,[90] in order to buy back a slave, the costly horse which the king had given him, charging him to keep it for himself.

Childebert died in his arms, and was buried in the church of the monastery which he had endowed so richly, with the consent of all the Frankish and Neustrian chiefs.[91] At his

[87] Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina*, ii. 10 and 11.

[88] Albert le Grand, p. 422.

[89] "Adeptus gradum curæ pastoralis, de reliquo monachus persistebat." — Albert le Grand, *Vit. S. Germani*, c. 12.

[90] *Chroniques de St. Denys*, liv. iii. c. 5. Compare Venant. Fort., c. 22.

[91] "Cum consensu et voluntate Francorum et Neustrasiorum." The

death his brother Clotaire became the sole king of the Frank monarchy. He too, despite his too certain ferocity, had known and loved the monks: he also desired to be buried in the church of the monastery which he had founded in his capital of Soissons under the name of St. Medard, which was that of a great bishop (the son of a Frank and a Roman woman) whose virtues he had admired, and whose words he had sometimes listened to. He testified his faith and his too just terrors, when dying, in these words, which Gregory of Tours has preserved to us: "What must be the power of that King of heaven, who makes the most powerful kings of the earth die thus as he pleases?"[92] Clotaire and St. Medard.

The great figure of St. Gregory of Tours overshadows all the second generation of the descendants of Clovis and those bloody struggles between the sons of Clotaire, of which he has left an undying picture in his famous narrative, restored and sometimes altered by the pen of the greatest historian of our day.[93] Some have looked on him as a monk,[94] and we would fain feel ourselves entitled to claim his pure glory for the monastic order; what is certain is, that he was by far the most honest and illustrious person of the times which he has described. Saddened and sometimes deeply discouraged by those horrors of which he was the witness and annalist, his soul was always superior to his fortune, and even to his talents. Without losing sight of that profound respect for the sovereign power with which the traditions of his family and his Roman predilections inspired him, he never hesitated to make a stand when it was necessary against the grandsons of Clovis, and especially against Chilperic, whom he called the Herod and Nero of his age; an atrocious and ridiculous tyrant, who dreamt, among all his crimes, of increasing the number of the letters of the alphabet, and of reducing that of the persons of the Trinity. Gregory of Tours and the sons of Clotaire.

Gregory labored with all his might, not for monarchical

authenticity of this famous charter, so often disputed, has been maintained by Mabillon. The dedication took place on the same day as the death of the king, December 23, 558. This date is confirmed by M. Guerard in his admirable edition of the *Polyptique d'Irminon*, t. i. p. 907–913. The first abbot was Droctoveus, whom Germain brought from his ancient monastery of St. Symphorian, at Autun.

[92] *Hist. Eccl. Franc.*, iii. 21.

[93] *Récits Mérovingiens*, by M. Augustin Thierry, who has, however, rendered full homage to the talent and character of his model.

[94] "Haud constat," says Mabillon, *Ann. Bened.*, lib. viii. c. 62.

unity, which no one dreamt of in these days, but for the union of the Merovingian race as the sole means of consolidating and justifying the sway of the Franks in Gaul. The history of France has inspired few finer pages than this preamble to his fifth book, in which, addressing himself to all those princes unbridled alike in ferocity and profligacy, he exclaims: —

"I am weary of narrating all the changes of these civil wars, which waste the kingdom and nation of the Franks. . . . What are you doing, O kings? What would you? What seek you? What is wanting to you? You inhabit delightful houses, your cellars overflow with wine, corn, and oil, and your coffers with gold and silver. One thing alone you lack, the grace of God, because you will not have peace. Why will you always take or covet the goods of others? . . . If civil war is sweet to thee, O king! give thyself to that which the Apostle has revealed to us in the heart of man, to the war of the spirit against the flesh; overcome thy vices by thy virtues: and then, enfranchised, thou shalt freely serve Christ, who is thy chief, after having been the bond-slave of evil." [95]

Amid the lifelike and varied narratives of the father of our history, it would be easy to glean facts which belong to our subject, and to show among the grandsons of Clovis, some who, like Gontran of Burgundy,[96] and Sigebert of Austrasia, were the friends of the monks and founders of new monaster-

[95] "Si ite, o rex! bellum civile delectat, illud quod Apostolus in hominem agi meminit, exerce, *ut spiritus concupiscat adversus carnem* (*Galat.* v. 17), et vitia virtutibus cedant; et tu, liber, capiti tuo, id est, Christo, servias, qui quondam radici malorum servieras compeditus." — *Lib.* v., *Prologus.*

[96] Gontran, son of Clotaire I., King of Orleans, afterwards of Burgundy, founded, about 577, at the gate of his new capital of Châlon-sur-Saône, a celebrated abbey under the patronage of St. Marcel, at the very place where this martyr was immolated by the Romans, and where he remained for three days alive, half buried in a pit, praying for his executioners, and for that land of Burgundy which he fertilized with his blood. In his deed of endowment, Gontran says: "I see with grief that as a punishment of your sins the churches built for the service of God fall to decay by the excessive ambition of the princes, and the too great neglect of the prelates." He desired the new abbey to be regulated after the model of Agaune, the great monastery of the Burgonde kingdom, which had preceded Merovingian Burgundy, and consequently introduced there the *Laus Perennis*. He followed the same course at St. Benigne, a monastery erected at Dijon over the tomb of another apostle and martyr of Burgundy. Gontran caused himself to be interred in the monastery which he had founded, as his father Clotaire had been at St. Médard, and his uncle Childebert at St. Germain-des-Prés. St. Marcel, converted into a priory of the order of Cluny in 1060, has since been celebrated as the scene of the retreat and death of Abelard.

ies; and some who, like Chilperic and his son during their incursions south of the Loire, abandoned the monastic sanctuaries to the flames, the monks to death or exile, and the nuns to the brutal insults of their soldiers.[97] It will be better worth our while to suspend that arid nomenclature, and pause a moment upon the noble attitude of a Gallo-Roman monk,[98] whom Gregory knew well, whose history he has related to us, and in whom monastic life seems to have developed a lively and tender solicitude for the misery of his fellow-citizens.

Aredius, chancellor of Theodebert, becomes a monk.

Aredius, born at Limoges of an exalted family, had been recommended, or given as a hostage, in his childhood, to the Frank king Theodebert, the same whom we have seen giving so cordial a welcome to the sons of St. Benedict at Glanfeuil. Aredius soon brought himself into so much favor with this prince that he became his secretary, or, as it was already called, his chancellor.[99] This was an office which then began to acquire great importance, and the holders of which repeatedly entered the ranks of the monastic order. That monk, called Nizier, who had become bishop of Treves, and whose courage and humanity we have already recorded, imagined that he saw the stamp of celestial grace in the face of the young courtier whom he met in the palace. He led him to his cell, where he spoke to him of God, and in bringing him to a knowledge of religious truth, inspired him with an inclination for cloistral life. A dove who, during these confidential interviews, came incessantly to the young and gentle Aredius to perch on his head or shoulder, still further convinced the prelate that the Holy Spirit was to inspire his pupil.[100]

[97] Greg. Turon., iv. 48.

[98] *Hist. Eccl. Francor.*, lib. x. c. 29. Two other Lives of St. Aredius also exist (ap. Bolland., t. vi. August., p. 175). The first and shortest, *Vita prima*, is by an anonymous contemporary. The second, *Vita prolixior*, is attributed by Mabillon, who has published it in his *Analecta* (p. 198), to Gregory of Tours himself; but Ruinart (*Opera. Greg. Tur.*, p. 1285) and the Bollandists have shown that this was incorrect. However, Gregory speaks of him in several other parts of his works. (*Hist. Franc.*, lib. viii. c. 15 and 27. *De Mirac. S. Juliani*, c. 40. *De Virtut. S. Martini.*, ii. 39. *De Gloria Confess.*, c. 9.)

[99] "Parentela nobili generatus. . . . Nobilissima videlicet origine. . . . Valde ingenuus. . . . Theodeberto regi traditus, aulicis palatinis adjungitur. . . . Ut cancellarius prior ante conspectum regis adsisteret. . . . Cancellarii sortitus officium." — *Ubi supra.* Le Huerou, founding upon some document whose origin he does not state (Sanctus Aridius, Lemovicensis abbas, apud Theodebertum cancellarius, *quæ prior erat militia palatina*), says that this charge was the most eminent post in the Court of the Merovingians. — *Instit. Merov.*, i. 383.

[100] "Nescio quid in vultu ejus cernens divinum. . . . Cum ingressi in

He permitted him, however, to return to his own country, to his mother Pelagia, who had no children but himself. But when he returned to his native Limousin, Aredius took no thought of his fields or his vineyards, which he gave up to his mother, charging her to provide for the subsistence of the little community which he formed on one of his estates, filling up its numbers principally from the people of his house,[101] and which became the origin of a town, named after him St. Yrieix.[102]

He had first intended to seclude himself in a cavern, but, at the prayer of his mother, he transferred his monastery to a more agreeable site. He divided his time between agricultural labor and study; he specially transcribed with his own hand copies of the Holy Scriptures and liturgical books which he took pleasure in distributing among the churches of the neighboring dioceses. The poor and the sick crowded to him like bees to the hive.[103] He helped the one and cured the other. He went to Tours every year out of his cloister to celebrate the feast of St. Martin, and, with many prayers, to kiss the tomb of the great bishop; then, crossing the Loire, went to Marmoutier to rebaptize himself in the monastic spirit, by visiting all the spots where Martin had knelt in prayer, or which he had sanctified by song; he carried back with him, as a medicine for his sick, the water of the well which Martin had opened by his own labor. There he met the Bishop Gregory, whose intimate friend he became, and who has preserved to us all these details.[104]

He interferes with the Merovingians to lighten taxation.

He continued in the mean time to keep up his intercourse with the Merovingian princes, and by this means interfered on behalf of the oppressed population. More than once, when the tributes and villain-tax were applied with too much severity to the

cellulam de iis quæ ad Deum pertinent confabularentur . . ." — Greg. Tur., loc. cit.

[101] "Sive exercitium agrorum, sive cultus vinearum. . . . Ex familia propria tonsuratos instruit monachos." — *Ibid.* In his *History*, Gregory says that he followed the rules of Cassianus, St. Basil, and other abbots, *qui monasterialem vitam instituerunt.* He makes no special mention of St. Benedict; but in the *Vita prolixior*, written by an eye-witness of the miracles which were performed on the tomb of Aredius at the end of the sixth century, everything bears the stamp of the Benedictine rule. Compare Bolland., loc. cit.

[102] Now a district county-town in the Haute-Vienne.

[103] "In villis amœnis. . . . Incumbens lectioni . . . laborans per agros, alimoniam corpori quærebat. . . . Codices sacros. . . . Multitudo pauperum velut apes ad alvearium confluebant ad eum." — *Vita prolixior*, p. 200.

[104] "Beatum sepulcrum orando deosculans. . . . Anno transito . . . cuncta circuit, cuncta peragrat. . . ." — *De Mir. S. Mart.*, ii. 39. Compare iii. 24.

cities of the Gauls, according to lists which the kings had made out, he hastened to ask a diminution of that intolerable burden. One day, when going through Paris, he had travelled secretly and in haste as far as Braine, where King Chilperic then was, the latter, who was sick of a fever, when informed of his arrival, immediately ordered him to be brought, in hope to obtain a cure by the prayers of the servant of God. But Aredius, while feeling his pulse, could speak of nothing but the object of his journey. The king, touched or terrified by his remonstrances, delivered up to him the lists of the contributions which weighed so cruelly upon the poor people. Then the abbot lighted a great fire and burned the fatal registers with his own hands, in the presence of a numerous crowd. He had before-announced that the king would be healed, but that his sons should die in his stead, which happened as he said.[105]

He burns the registers.

On another occasion, having heard that there were several persons condemned to death at Limoges, he went from his monastery to the town, to consult upon the means of saving them. Here popular tradition is carried away by the memory of that compassion for all kinds of misfortunes with which the heart of the holy abbot overflowed. It records, that as soon as he approached the prison, the doors turned on their hinges of themselves, and all the locks were broken, as well as the chains of the captives, who were thus enabled to escape and seek an inviolable asylum at the tomb of St. Martial, the first apostle of Limousin.[106]

[105] "Accidit ut populis tributa vel census a regibus fuissent descripta: quæ conditio universis urbibus per Gallias constitutis summopere est adhibita. Pro hac se vir reverentissimus pietate motus ad regis præsentiam properavit, ut suggestionem daret pro civibus, qui gravi censu publico fuerant edicto adscripti. . . . Alio quoque tempore, pro hujuscemodi conditione properavit itinere. . . . Cœpit cum manibus suis palpare. . . . Libros ipsos, quibus inscriptus pro gravi censu populus regni ejus tenebatur afflictus. . . . Jussit prunas parari. . . . Apprehensos manibus ipsis libros, multis etiam circumstantibus, incendio concremavit." — *Vita prolixior*, p. 203. The Bollandists (p. 190) and Ruinart think that this king, who is not named in the contemporary narrative, was Chilperic I., king of Neustria, and son of Clotaire; but it is singular that Gregory of Tours, who knew Aredius so well, has not named him in relating how Fredegond and Chilperic decided on burning the taxing lists after the death of their three sons. — *Hist. Franc.*, lib. i. c. 35.

[106] "Confestim . . . velut magno ferientis impulsu confractæ seræ, dissipati cardines ostia carceris patefacta, et omnia vincula compeditorum resoluta sunt." — *Vita prolixior*, p. 201. Gregory of Tours relates another incident which shows to what an extent the monks were then regarded as the natural and powerful protectors of the condemned. A criminal was condemned to death; when he had been hung, the rope broke, and he fell to the ground

His will. A still more authentic memorial of his solicitude for his inferiors remains to us in his will, written twenty years before his death, and confirmed on the eve of that day when, full of years and labors,[107] he appeared before God. By this document he places his monastery and monks, his villa of Excideuil with all the serfs or *mancipia* who cultivated his vineyards, and whose names and families he enumerates carefully, under the protection of the church of St. Martin of Tours, which was then the most venerated sanctuary in Gaul. He stipulates expressly that certain female vassals, whom he names, should pay only a *triens* each, yearly, to the monks of his monastery. Finally, he mentions name by name, fifty men and women, among whom was a certain Lucy, whom he had ransomed from captivity; he intrusted their freedom to the guardianship of St. Martin. "These are," he says, "my freed men and women, some of whom have been confided to me by my father of blessed memory, and the others I have myself enfranchised for the good of my brother's soul; I give them to thy charge, my lord St. Martin. And if any man assumes to exact from them what they do not owe, or to disturb and oppress them for any reason whatever, it shall be thy part, St. Martin, to defend them."[108]

His death. During the last sufferings of this benefactor of the unfortunate and the slaves, a poor sick woman, one possessed with a devil, whom the holy abbot had not been able to heal, escaped from the prison where she had been confined, and ran to the monastery, crying — "Come, friends and neighbors, make haste; come, let us hasten to

without being hurt. They hung him anew. On this news, the abbot of the nearest monastery ran to the count, or judge of the district, to intercede for him, and after having obtained the life of the culprit, he brought him to the monastery penitent and saved. — *De Mirac. S. Martini*, iii. 53.

[107] "Post labores innumeros viriliter ac fortiter toleratos." — *Vita prima*, No. 13.

[108] "Volumus ut . . . sub defensione tua, sancte domine Martine, consistant . . . cum Lucia quam redemimus captivam. . . . Ita *liberos* et *liberas* nostras, quos nobis bonæ memoriæ genitor noster Jocundus per testamentum suum commendavit, similiter et illos quos pro remedio animæ bonæ memoriæ fratris nostri Eustadii liberos fecimus tibi, sancte Martine, defensando commendamus. Et si quis eis amplius præter hoc quod eis injunctum et in quolibet inquietare aut dominare voluerit, tu, sancte Martine, defendas." — Mabillon, *Analecta*, p. 209. The authenticity of this testament, mentioned by Gregory of Tours, published and annotated as authentic by Mabillon and Ruinart, has been disputed by Le Cointe. The Bollandists discuss without deciding this question. It is very long, and contains a multitude of arrangements which make it one of the most curious documents of the period.

meet the martyrs and confessors who are coming to celebrate the obsequies of our holy abbot. Behold Julian approaching from Brives, Martin from Tours, Martial from our city of Limoges, Saturnin from Toulouse, Denis from Paris, and many others who are in heaven, and to whom you appeal as martyrs and confessors of God." Aredius some time before had predicted his own death to his friend Gregory of Tours, and taken leave of him while kissing the tomb of St. Martin for the last time; he died above eighty years old; and the poor possessed woman was cured by his intercession.[109]

That faith which opened heaven to the eyes of that poor woman, and showed her the apostles whose martyrdom had worked the first conversion of Gaul, standing closer in their ranks to admit the new confessors produced by the monastic order, — that ardent and tender faith naturally inspired the hearts of the Christian women of Gaul, and rendered the cloisters from which issued so many alms, and at the same time so many examples of virtue, more and more dear to them. Those who did not adopt religious life in their own person had brothers or sisters in it, or dearer still, sons and daughters; and maternal love thus redoubled their attachment to an institution in which all the blessings and duties of Christianity were to them embodied. The same Gregory of Tours whose invaluable narrative enlightens us in the history, not of the early times of our country alone, but also of the human heart, relates a touching incident in connection with the famous abbey of Agaune (which we have already mentioned[110]), which was built in honor of St. Maurice and the martyrs of the Theban legion, on a site near the outlet of the Rhone into the Lake of Geneva, and became the monastic metropolis of the kingdom of Burgundy. A mother had taken her only son to this monastery, where he became a monk, especially instructed and skilful in chanting the liturgical service; he fell sick and died; his mother, in despair, came to bury him, and returned every day to weep and lament over his tomb. One night she saw St. Maurice in a dream attempting to console her, but

Maternal love and monastic song.

[109] "Dixit nobis se haud longævo tempore adhuc in hoc mundo retineri. . . . Vale dicens . . . gratias agens quod priusquam obiret, sepulcrum B. antistitis osculari promeruisset. . . . Currite, cives, exsilite, populi; exite obviam. . . . Ecce adest Julianus, . . . Martialis ab urbe propria, . . . Dionysius ab urbe Parisiaca, . . . quos vos ut confessores et Dei martyres adoratis." — Greg. Tur., x. 29.

[110] See p. 291, and p. 450, on the occasion of the journey of St. Maur.

answered him, "No, no; as long as I live I shall always weep my son, my sole child." "But," answered the saint, "he must not be wept for as if he were dead: he is with us, he rejoices in eternal life, and to-morrow at matins, in the monastery, thou shalt hear his voice among the choir of the monks; and not to-morrow only but every day as long as thou livest." The mother immediately rose and waited with impatience the first sound of the bell for matins, to hasten to the church of the monks. The precentor having intoned the response, when the monks in full choir took up the anthem, the mother immediately recognized the voice of her dear child. She gave thanks to God; and every day for the rest of her life, thus deluding her grief and maternal tenderness, the moment she approached the choir, she heard the voice of her well-beloved son mingle in the sweet and holy harmony of the liturgical chant.[111] And to us too it seems to echo across the ages, that voice of the child, *vocem infantuli*, the purest, the dearest, the most heaven-like melody that the human ear can receive.

The Armorican legend also stirs that same chord of maternal love. It tells us how the mother of the Christian bard, the blind Herve, having consented to place him for seven years apart from her in a cloister, where he was taught to excel in song, went to see him, and said, as she was approaching: "I see a procession of monks advancing, and I hear the voice of my son; if there should be a thousand singing together, I could still distinguish the voice of my Herve. I see my son in a gray habit, with a girdle of rope. God be with you, my son, the clerk! when, with the help of God, I get to heaven, you shall be warned of it, you shall hear the angels sing." The same evening after she had so happily seen him, she died; and her son, the precentor and monastic bard, heard the angels who celebrated her obsequies in heaven.[112]

[111] "Cucurrit mater orbata ad obsequium funeris plangens . . . per dies singulos veniebat, et super sepulcrum nati sui . . . ejulabat . . . 'Dum advixero, semper deflebo unicum meum, nec unquam migrabor a lacrymis, donec oculos corporis hujus . . . mors concludat. — Scias eum nobiscum habitare et sedentem vitæ perennis consortio nostro perfrui. . . . Surge crastina die ad matutinum, et audies vocem ejus inter choros psallentium monachorum.' Surgit mulier, longaque ducit suspiria, nec obdormit in strato suo, donec, signum ad consurgendum commoveatur a monachis. . . . Ubi cantator responsorium, antiphonam caterva suscepit monachorum, audit genitrix, parvuli vocem cognoscit, et gratias agit Deo. . . . Impletum est ut omnibus diebus vitæ suæ vocem audiret infantuli inter reliqua modulamina vocum." — Greg. Tur., *De Glor. Martyrum*, c. 76.

[112] La Villemarqué, *Légende Celtique*, p. 257.

The noble Aredius, whose death has carried us back into legendary ground, did not leave his cloister only to pray at the tomb of St. Martin, or to seek favor for an oppressed people from the Merovingian kings. He also went every year to visit in a monastery of Poitiers the most illustrious nun of that age, Queen Radegund.

IV. — ST. RADEGUND.

I shall die in my nest. — Job xxix. 18.

Ella giunse e levò ambo le palme,
Ficcando gli occhi verso l'oriente,
Come dicesse a Dio: d'altro non calme.
Te lucis ante sì divotamente
Le uscì de bocca è con sì dolci note
Che fece me a me uscir di mente.
E l'altre poi dolcemente e divote
Seguitar lei per tutto l'inno intero
Avendo gli occhi alle superne rote.
Purgat., c. viii.

We have now to contemplate at greater length a sweet and noble figure which appears before us; it is that of the holy queen who gave the first example, so often followed since, of a crowned head bowed under the common discipline of monastic laws. Her holy but troubled life, as fit a subject for the poet as for the historian, was contemporary with all the crimes which soiled the annals of the descendants of Clovis. It inaugurates worthily that wonderful action of monastic life upon the women and queens of barbarous nations, which placed a Radegund and a Bathilde upon the throne and the altar, in an age which seemed to be given up as a prey to the Fredegunds and Brunehaults.

Her origin and captivity.

During the expedition of the kings Thierry I. and Clotaire I., beyond the Rhine, and the war of extermination which they waged against the Thuringians in 529, the daughter of a king of Thuringia fell into the hands of the victors. Her name was Radegund; [113] and, de-

[113] We have her life written first by two contemporaries — the poet Fortunatus, bishop of Poitiers, and Baudonivia, a nun whom she had brought up; afterwards by Hildebert of Mans, in the twelfth century. A curious work, entitled the *Preuve Historique des Litanies de la Grande Reyne de France Saincte Radegonde*, by M. Jean Filleau, Doctor and Regent of the Univerity, Advocate of the King, &c. (Poitiers, 1543, in folio), may also be consulted. Everybody has read the passages referring to her in M. Augustin Thierry's *Récits Mérovingiens*. M. Edouard de Fleury, in his *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde* (Poitiers, 1843), and, above all, the learned and lamented Abbot Gorini, in his excellent work, entitled *Défense de l'Eglise Catholique contre les Erreurs Historiques*, &c. (Lyon, 1853, t. ii. ch. 15), have very profitably refuted the numerous errors which detract from the value of the narrative of the illustrious blind historian.

spite her extreme youth, her precocious beauty fascinated the two brothers to such a point that they had almost come to blows to dispute the possession of her. She fell to Clotaire, the most cruel and debauched of all the sons of Clovis. The young and royal captive, snatched from her family by the right of conquest, amid the carnage and devastation of her country, was taken into one of the villas of Clotaire, where he gave her a careful, and even literary education, with the intention of one day making her his wife. She had a great taste for study, but, above everything, for piety; and, far from aspiring to share the bed and throne of her ferocious conqueror, she told her young companions that she desired nothing so much as martyrdom.[114]

Clotaire marries her.

When she was eighteen, and knew that the king was preparing everything for their marriage, she escaped by night in a boat, from the house, situated on the Somme, where she had been kept. But she was soon retaken, and Clotaire shortly afterwards added his prisoner to the number of his queens — that is, of the wives whom he elevated above the rank of concubines.[115] He is known to have had six of this degree, two of whom were the widows of his brothers, and two sisters whom he had married at the same time. As for Radegund, he loved her passionately, and more than all the others, at least for a time, even while chafing at her coldness, and the strange contrast which he did not fail to perceive between her and himself. "It is not a queen that I have here," he said — "it is a true nun."[116]

[114] "Vultu elegans. . . . Litteris erudita. . . . Frequenter loquens cum parvulis . . . martyr fieri cupiens." — Act. SS. Bolland., t. iii. Aug., pp. 68, 84. "Elegantissima, speciosa nimis et venusta aspectu." — *Vit. S. Juniani*, c. 5, ap. Act. SS. O. S. Ben., t. i. p. 293.

[115] Compare Act. SS. Bolland., loc. cit., p. 50. We may be permitted to refer to the learned commentary of the Jesuit hagiographies for the difficulties which are raised, not only by the polygamy of Clotaire, but especially by the question, how Radegund could have taken the veil during the lifetime of her husband. We must do Clotaire the justice to acknowledge that, in spite of his unbounded licentiousness, he could respect virginity when it appeared to him consecrated by religion, as is shown in the touching history of Consortia, a rich heiress of Provence, whose immense fortune had drawn around her a crowd of pretenders, and who went to ask of Clotaire the favor of remaining in celibacy in her own domains, the revenue of which was devoted to the Church and to the poor. She obtained it, after having cured one of the daughters of Clotaire of a mortal malady. Subsequently this young princess obtained her brother Sigebert's protection for Consortia, who was again sought in marriage by a Frank noble, that she might keep the liberty which had been promised to her by Clotaire. — Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 235.

[116] "Quam tanto amore dilexit, ut nihil præter illam se habere aliquoties

The young and beautiful captive naturally sought in religion the only grace which could console her for her marriage, and the only strength which could be respected, though scarcely understood, by the master to whom she was obliged to submit. When the king called her to sup with him, she made him wait till she had finished her pious readings, which enraged Clotaire. But the amorous Barbarian soon attempted to make amends by presents for his angry words. During the night she rose from his side to stretch herself upon haircloth until she was half frozen, and could scarcely be restored to warmth by her bed. Her days were devoted to the study of sacred literature, to prolonged interviews with the students and bishops who came to the court of Soissons, and, above all, to almsgiving, and the management of a hospital which she had founded in that estate of Athies, where she had passed the first years of her captivity, and where she herself waited on the sick women with the most devoted care.[117]

Her conjugal life.

Everything in her life reveals the absolute dominion of the faith of Christ upon her soul, and her passionate desire to serve that faith without reservation or delay. At one time, when her servants had praised the new attraction added to her beauty by a sort of head-dress, ornamented with jewels, which was worn by Barbarian queens, she hastened to lay that diadem upon the altar of the nearest church.[118] And at another, indignant to see in her path a pagan temple, a vestige of that which she regarded as a diabolical superstition, she paused in the midst of her military retinue to order its destruction; and, in spite of the furious outcries and desperate resistance of the surrounding population, composed of Franks who were still idolaters and defended the sanctuary of their national worship with swords and clubs, she remained on horseback in the middle of her train till the building had disappeared in the flames.[119]

fateretur." — *Vita S. Juniani*, loc. cit. "Dicebatur habere se magis jugalem monacham quam reginam." — BOLLAND., p. 69.

[117] "Rixas habebat a conjuge, ita ut vicibus multis princeps per munera satisfaceret quod per linguam peccasset. . . . Gelu penetrata . . . vix tepefieri poterat vel foco vel lectulo. . . . Morborum curabat putredines, virorum capita diluens." — BOLLAND., p. 69.

[118] "Quoties . . . more vestiebat de barbaro, a circumstantibus puellis si laudaretur pulcherrimum." — BOLLAND., p. 69.

[119] "Sæculari pompa se comitante. . . . Fanum quod a Francis colebatur . . . diabolico machinamento. . . . Franci et universa multitudo cum gladiis et fustibus. . . . Regina . . . equum quem sedebat inantea non movit." — BOLLAND., p. 76. The nun Baudonivia, in relating this anecdote, says,

Six years after her marriage, Clotaire killed, without any reason, a young brother of Radegund, the companion of her captivity, whom she loved tenderly. This was the signal of her deliverance. With the permission of her husband, how obtained it is not known, she left Soissons and went to Noyon to the Bishop Medard, who had great influence over the king and all the nation.

She takes the veil. 544.

She found him at the altar where he was celebrating mass, and besought him to consecrate her to God by giving her the veil. The bishop hesitated and resisted; the Frank lords who were present surrounded him, brought him down from the altar with violence, and forbade him to consecrate to God a woman whom the king had made a queen by public marriage. Radegund then took from the sacristy the dress of a nun, in which she clothed herself, and, returning to the altar, said to the bishop, "If thou delayest to consecrate me, if thou fearest man more than God, the Good Shepherd will demand an account from thee of the soul of one of his sheep." Medard was thunderstruck by these words, and immediately laid his hands on her, and consecrated her a deaconess.[120] Clotaire himself did not venture at first to interfere with what had been done. The new nun, using her recognized freedom, went from sanctuary to sanctuary, dropping everywhere, in the form of offerings, her ornaments and queenly robes. Crossing the Loire, she arrived first at Tours, at the tomb of St. Martin, to which pilgrims and the unfortunate resorted from all parts of Christendom, and where she perhaps found her illustrious mother-in-law Clotilda, who had come to await death near the holy tomb.[121] She afterwards established herself in the lands of Saix, in Poitou, which her husband had granted her; and there, living a truly recluse life, she began to practise the most rigorous austerities, and especially lavished her cares upon the poor and sick, and rendered them the most repulsive services. After having bathed the lepers with her own hands, she kissed their disgusting sores. "Holy lady," said one of her servants, one day, "who will kiss you, if you thus kiss the lepers?" "Well," said she,

"Quod audivimus dicimus, et quod vidimus testamur." It is probable that before following the queen into the cloister she was a member of her lay household.

[120] "Ne velaret regi conjunctam. . . . Reginam non publicanam, sed publicam. . . . Intrans in sacrarium, monachica veste induitur. . . . Quod ille contestationis concussus tonitruo." — Bolland., loc. c., p. 70.

[121] Mabillon fixes her death in 544. The Bollandists (die 3 Junii) mention no precise date.

smiling, "if thou dost never kiss me again, that is nothing to me." [122]

Clotaire attempts to reclaim her.

However, her fame so spread that Clotaire, whose love was revived by absence, set out to reclaim her.[123] She then took refuge at the tomb of St. Hilary, in Poitiers; and he, again overcome by religious fear, gave her permission to build a monastery for women at Poitiers, and to seclude herself in it. When this cloister was completed, she entered it triumphantly amid popular rejoicings, making her way through crowds of spectators, who, after filling all the streets and squares, covered even the roofs of houses from which they could see her pass [124]

545.

He is prevented by St. Germain.

But she was soon assailed by new terrors. She heard that under pretext of devotion Clotaire had arrived at Tours, and that he had arranged to come to Poitiers to seek her whom he called his dear queen. The holy bishop Medard could no longer use his influence to defend her: he was just dead. But the illustrious bishop of Paris, Germain, was still living: she wrote to him, adjuring him to persuade the king to respect her vow. The bishop sought the king before the tomb of St. Martin, and supplicated him on his knees, weeping, not to go to Poitiers. Clotaire recognized the voice of Radegund through the words of Germain, but recognized at the same time how unworthy he himself was to have for his queen a woman who had always preferred God's will to her own. He knelt in his turn before the bishop, and begged him to go and ask pardon of that saint for all the wrong which evil counsels had made him undertake against her. And from this time he left her in peace.[125]

She founds the monastery of St. Croix in Poitiers.

Radegund then employed herself in constituting upon a solid foundation the community in which she was to pass the last forty years of her life. This community was very numerous: the queen's presence attracted to it nearly two hundred young girls of various races and conditions, and amongst these Gauls of senatorial family, and Frank princesses of Merovingian blood.[126]

[122] "Sanctissima domina, quis te osculabitur, quæ sic leprosos complecteris? . . . Vere, si me non osculeris, hinc mihi non cura est." — P. 71.

[123] "Fit sonus quasi rex eam iterum vellet accipere." — P. 76.

[124] Bolland, loc. cit., p. 76.

[125] "Jam per internuntios cognoverat. . . . Quasi devotionis causa . . . ut suam reginam acciperet. . . . Sacramentales litteras fecit. . . . Prosternit se et ille ante limina S. Martini pedibus apostolici viri." — Bolland., loc. cit., p. 76.

[126] Greg. Turon., *De Glor. Confessor*, c. 106.

But she would not govern them herself, and caused a young girl named Agnes, whom she had herself trained, to be elected abbess. Restricting herself severely to the rank and obligations of a simple nun, she took her turn in cooking, in carrying wood and water, and in cleaning away the filth; while, notwithstanding, she pursued her studies of the Fathers and the Holy Scriptures, and especially continued with the most courageous perseverance her care of the poor.[127] But this sincere and active humility did not prevent her from being considered by all the nuns, as well as by the whole Church, the true superior of the monastery which she had founded. At her petition, the bishops of the second Council of Tours sanctioned the irrevocable vow of virgins consecrated to God, according to the rule of St. Cæsarius, for she went as far as Arles to study and bring back the wise and severe rule which that great bishop had instituted there, a century before, for the monastery governed by his sister.[128] She had need of that protection from without, for the bishop of Poitiers, Merovée, showed an inveterate hostility to her all her life.[129]

Her cloistral life.

On the other hand, to adorn still better her dear sanctuary, she sent to the Emperor Justin at Constantinople to ask for a fragment of the true cross, which he granted to her. A new Helena, she received with transports of joy the holy relic which gave its name to her monastery; and the sublime accents of the *Vexilla regis* and of the *Pange lingua* echoed for the first time in the ears of the faithful upon the occasion of its arrival — new hymns with which that solemnity inspired the poet Venantius Fortunatus, and which all the Church has sung since then.

Her friendship with the poet Fortunatus.

This Fortunatus[130] was an Italian, who, coming to visit the sanctuaries of God, had established himself at Poitiers. He became, long after, the bishop of that city, and the biographer of Radegund, but then was only famed for his poetical talents. The cloistered queen made him her secretary, and the intendant of

[127] "Monachabus soporantibus calceamenta tergens et ungens. . . . Scopans monasterii plateas . . . secretum etiam opus purgare non tardans, sed scopans ferebat fœtores stercorum; credebat se minorem sibi, si se non nobilitaret servitii vilitate . . . capita lavans egenorum . . . mulieres variis lepræ perfusas maculis comprehendens in amplexibus."—Bolland., pp. 68, 72.

[128] See above, p. 277.

[129] Greg. Turon., *Hist.*, lib. ix. c. 39, 40.

[130] Born at Ceneda, near Trevise, in 530. He became bishop of Poitiers only in 599, twelve years after the death of Radegund.

the goods of the monastery. In verses where classic recollections and literary graces mingle perhaps too often with the inspirations of the Catholic faith, he enters into many curious and valuable details of the touching intimacy which existed between himself, the abbess Agnes, and Radegund.[131] He often speaks in the name of the latter, especially in one celebrated passage, where he supposes the queen to retain, after having reached the age of fifty, a poignant and impassioned recollection of her ravaged country, her murdered family, and of a cousin who had by that time found a refuge at Constantinople, and who had perhaps shared the first days of her captivity, when she herself, led into bondage, had left her Germanic fatherland forever.

As it has been said that Radegund herself had dictated these verses, which breathe the sentiment of true poetry, we shall quote some passages, literally translated: —

"When the wind murmurs, I listen if it brings me some news, but of all my kindred not even a shadow presents itself to me. . . . And thou, Amalafried, gentle son of my father's brother, does no anxiety for me consume thy heart? Hast thou forgotten what Radegund was to thee in thy earliest years, and how much thou lovest me, and how thou heldest the place of the father, mother, brother, and sister whom I had lost? An hour absent from thee seemed to me eternal; now ages pass, and I never hear a word from thee. A whole world now lies betwixt those who loved each other, and who of old were never separate. If others, for pity alone, cross the Alps to seek their lost slaves, wherefore am I forgotten, I who am bound to thee by blood? Where art thou? I ask the wind as it sighs, the clouds as they pass; at least some bird might bring me news of thee. If the holy enclosure of this monastery did not restrain me, thou shouldst see me suddenly appear beside thee. I could cross the stormy seas, in winter, if it was necessary. The tempest that alarms the sailors should cause no fear to me who love thee. If my vessel were dashed to pieces by the tempest, I should cling to a plank to reach thee; and if I could find nothing to cling to, I should go to thee swimming, exhausted! If I could but see thee once more, I should deny all the perils of the journey; and if I died by the way, thou shouldst make me a grave in the sand, and in burying me

[131] We refer again to the peremptory refutation which M. Gorini has given to the erroneous suppositions of MM. Ampère and Augustin Thierry with regard to that friendship.

shouldst weep for her, dead, whose tears, when living, thou disdainedst." [132]

Her tenderness for her nuns.

But if the holy recluse permitted the Italian poet to invoke, in her name, those passionate images of the past, of her country, and her young affections, no trace of them appeared in her life. On the contrary, she had concentrated all the warmth of her tenderness upon her monastic family. When she saw all her young and numerous brood collected round her, she constantly addressed them thus: "I love you so much, that I remember no longer that I have had relations and married a king. I no longer love anything but you, young girls whom I have chosen, young flowers whom I have planted — you, my eyes and my life, my rest and my happiness!" [133] Thus surrounded, she could forget all the outer world. One evening, as Fortunatus himself relates, towards the close of day, some musicians passed the walls of the monastery dancing and singing loudly. The saint was at prayers with two of her sisters; one of them said to her gayly, "Madam, these dancers are singing one of the airs which I used to sing myself in old times." "Truly,"

[132] "Specto libens aliquam si nuntiet aura salutem,
Nullaque de cunctis umbra parentis adest. . . .
An quod in absenti te nec mea cura remordet,
Affectum dulcem cladis amara tulit?
Vel memor esto, tuis primævis qualis ab annis,
Hamalefrede, tibi tunc Radegundes eram.
Quantum me quondam dulcis delixeris infans. . . .
Vixerat in spatium, quo te minus hora referret;
Sæcula nunc fugiunt, nec tua verba fero. . . .
Inter amatores totusque interjacet orbis. . . .
Si famulos alii, pietatis lege, requirunt,
Cur ego præterear, sanguine juncta parens? . . .
Quæ loca te teneant, si sibilat aura, requiro;
Nubila si volites, pendula posco locum. . . .
Prospera vel veniens nuntia ferret avis!
Sacra monasterii si me non claustra tenerent,
Improvisa aderam, qua regione sedes. . . .
Et quod nauta timet non pavitasset amans. . . .
Ad te venissem, lassa, natante manu.
Cum te respicerem, peregrina pericla negassem. . . .
Vel tumulum manibus ferret arena tuis. . . .
Qui spernis vitæ fletus, lacrymatus humares."

M. Augustin Thierry has reproduced the complete text of this poem, entitled *De Excidio Thuringiæ ex Persona Radegundis*, at the end of his *Récits Mérovingiens*, taking advantage of the various readings discovered by M. Guérard.

[133] "In tantum dilexit, ut etiam parentis vel regem conjugem se habuisse, quod frequenter nobis etiam dum prædicabat, dicebat: . . . Vos, lumina; vos, mea vita; . . . vos, novella plantatio." — Baudonivia, *Monialis Æqualis*, ap. Bolland., p. 77.

said the queen, "I wonder that, belonging to the Lord, you can take pleasure in listening to these worldly sounds." "But, indeed," answered the sister, "it is because I hear two or three of my own songs." "Well, well! as for me," said the queen, "I take God to witness that I have not heard a single note of that profane music." [134]

Her solicitude for peace among the Merovingian princes.

However, governed by these affections of the cloister and thoughts of heaven as she was, she retained, notwithstanding, an anxious solicitude for the interests of the royal house and the country of her marriage. At the height of the struggles between her daughters-in-law, the atrocious Fredegund and Brunehault, she perpetually interposed to preach peace and reconciliation. The salvation of the country, says the faithful companion of her life, was always in her mind; she trembled through all her frame when she heard of some new rupture. Although she, perhaps, inclined towards the side of Brunehault and her children, she included all the Merovingian princes in her love. She wrote to all the kings, one after the other, and then to the principal lords, adjuring them to watch over the true interests of the people and the country. "Peace between the kings is my victory," she said; and to obtain this from the celestial King, she engaged the prayers of all her community, and redoubled, for her own part, her fasts, penances, and charity.[135]

Her austerities.

For this woman, who is represented to us as "seeking a sort of compromise between monastic austerity and the softened and elegant habits of civilized society," [136] was not only the first to practise what she taught to others, but actually inflicted tortures upon herself to reduce her flesh more completely into servitude. It is true that, full of indulgence for her companions, she permitted them frequent intercourse with their friends outside, repasts

[134] "Inter choraulas et citharas . . . multo fremitu cantaretur. . . . Domina, recognovi unam de meis canticis a saltantibus prædicari. . . . Vere, Domina, duas et tres hic modo meas canticas audivi quas tenuit." — VENANTIUS FORTUNAT., *Ibid.*, p. 74. These two sketches, which M. Thierry has not thought proper to draw from sources which he has so often quoted, might have sufficed to refute most of his assertions.

[135] "Semper de salute patriæ curiosa . . . quia totos diligebat reges. . . . Tota tremebat, et quales litteras uni, tales dirigebat alteri. . . . Ut, eis regnantibus, populi et *patria* salubrior redderetur." — BAUDONIVA, loc. c., p. 78. Compare p. 80, on Brunehault. This is an excellent answer to that professor who wrote, some years ago, that the word *patrie* was unknown in the Christian world before the *Renaissance*.

[136] AUG. THIERRY, *Récits Mérovingiens*, t. ii. p. 153, 7th edition.

in common, and even dramatic entertainments, the custom of which was then introduced, and long maintained in the learned communities of the middle ages.[137] But she refused for herself every recreation or softening of the rule. She went so far as to heat a metal cross in the fire and stamp it upon her flesh, which was still too delicate to satisfy her, as the sacred stigmata of her love for the crucified Saviour.[138]

Her friendship for the Benedictine Junian.

Till the time of her death she wore upon her naked flesh an iron chain, which she had received as a gift from a lord of Poitou, named Junian, who had, like herself, quitted the world for a life of solitude, and who kept together by the bond of charity a numerous body of monks under the rule which the beloved disciple of Benedict had just brought into Gaul. A worthy rival of the charity of Radegund, he supported, at great expense, herds of cattle and rich poultry-yards, in order to give the poor peasants oxen for ploughing, clothes, eggs, and cheese, and even fowls for the sick. He wore no other dress than the woollen robes which the queen span for him. They had agreed to pray for each other after their death; they died on the same day, at the same hour, and the messengers, who left at once the St. Croix of Poitiers and the cloister inhabited by Junian, met half way with the same melancholy news.[139]

They died on the same day.

13th August, 587.

Funeral and will of Radegund.

Gregory of Tours celebrated the funeral of the holy queen, and tells us that even in her coffin her beauty was still dazzling. Around this coffin the two hundred nuns whom she had drawn from the world to give them to God, chanted a kind of plaintive eclogue, in which they celebrated the virtues of their abbess, and the love with which she inspired them. Then when Gregory

[137] "Barbatorias intus eo quod celebraverit. . . . De tabula vero respondit, et si lusisset vivente Domna Radegunde. . . . De conviviis ait se nullam novam fecisse consuetudinem, nisi sicut actum est sub Domna Radegunde." — GREG. TUR., *Hist.*, x. 245. Compare MAGNIN, *Journal des Savants*, May 1860.

[138] VENANT. FORTUNAT., loc. cit.

[139] "Sub B. Benedicti regula. . . . Tantæ charitatis glutino omnem monachorum catervam constrinxerat. . . . Quem S. Radegundis sacrificiis suis fovebat. . . . Nec aliud tegminis habuit, nisi quod ab illa conficiebatur. . . . Sed et illa sanctissima catenam ferri ab illo sanctissimo viro accepit. . . . Declarat mandatum ut statim cum a sæculo migrasset nuntiaretur B. Radegundis." — WULFINUS *Episc.*, *Vit. S. Juniani*, ap. LABBE, *Nov. Bibl. MS.*, t. ii. p. 572. This Junian, Abbot of Mairé in Poitou, must not be confounded with another St. Junian, hermit, after whom the town of that name in Limousin was called. Compare BOLLAND., vol. iii. Aug., p. 32, and vol. vii. Octobr., p. 841.

conducted the body to the grave, where the seclusion prescribed by the rule of St. Cæsarius debarred the nuns from following, he saw them press to the windows, and to the towers and battlements of the monastery, where their lamentations, tears, and the wringing of their hands, rendered a last homage to their royal foundress.[140] Before her death she had made a kind of will, in which she took no title but that of *Radegund, sinner,* and in which she put her dear monastery under the charge of St. Martin and St. Hilary, adjuring the bishops and kings to treat as spoilers and persecutors of the poor all who should attempt to disturb the community, to change its rule, or dispossess its abbess.

Tumults in the monastery.

But it was rather from internal disorders than outside enemies that her work required to be preserved. Even in her own lifetime one of the nuns had escaped over the wall of the abbey, and, taking refuge in the church of St. Hilary, had poured forth a hundred calumnies against the abbess. She had been made to re-enter the monastery, hoisted up by ropes, at the same part of the rampart by which she descended, and had acknowledged the falsehood of her accusations against Agnes and Radegund.[141]

Revolt of the nuns under two princesses of the Merovingian blood.

After their death matters were still worse. Among the Frank princesses whom she had led or received into the shadow of the sanctuary of St. Croix, there were two who retained all the Barbarian vehemence, and who, far from profiting by the example of the widow of Clotaire, showed themselves only too faithful to the blood of their grandsire. These were Chrodield, daughter of King Caribert, and the unfortunate Basine, daughter of King Chilperic and Queen Audovere, whom Fredegund, her infamous mother-in-law, had cast into the cloister, after having had her dishonored by her valets.[142] At the death of the abbess Agnes, who soon followed her benefactress to the grave, Chrodield, irritated at not having been elected in her place, formed a plot against the new abbess Leubovere, and left the monastery with her cousin and forty other nuns, saying, "I go to the kings my relations to let them know the

[140] "Reperimus eam jacentem in feretro, cujus sancta facies ita fulgebat ut liliorum rosarumque sperneret pulchritudinem." — Greg. Turon. "Transeuntibus nobis sub muro, iterum caterva virginum per fenestras turrium et ipsa quoque muri propugnacula . . . ita ut inter sonos fletuum atque conlisiones palmarum." — *De Gloria Confess.*, c. 106. Compare Magnin, loc. cit.

[141] Greg. Turon., *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. x. c. 40.

[142] *Ibid.*, lib. v. c. 40.

ignominy which has been inflicted on us, for we have been treated here not like the daughters of kings, but like the daughters of miserable slaves." Without listening to the remonstrances of the bishops, they broke the locks and doors, and went on foot from Poitiers to Tours, where they arrived panting, worn, and exhausted, by roads flooded by the great rains, and without having eaten anything on the road. Chrodield presented herself to Gregory of Tours, who read to the party the sentence of excommunication pronounced by the Council of Tours against nuns guilty of breaking their seclusion, entreated them not to destroy thus the work of the holy queen Radegund, and offered to conduct them back to Poitiers. "No, no," said Chrodield; "we are going to the kings."

Gregory succeeded in persuading them to wait at least for the summer. The fine weather having come, Chrodield left her cousin and her companions at Tours, and went to her uncle Gontran, King of Burgundy, who received her well, and named certain bishops to investigate the quarrel. Returning to Tours, she found that several of the fugitives had allowed themselves to be seduced and married. With those that remained she returned to Poitiers, and they installed themselves in the church of St. Hilary with a troop of robbers and bandits to defend them, saying always, "We are queens, and we will only return to the monastery when the abbess is expelled from it." The metropolitan of Bordeaux then appeared with the Bishop of Poitiers and two others of his suffragans, and, upon their obstinate refusal to return to their monastery, excommunicated them. But the bandits whom they had hired for their defence attacked the bishops, threw them down upon the pavement of the church, and broke the heads of several deacons in their suite. A panic seized the episcopal train: every man saved himself as he could. Chrodield afterwards sent her followers to seize the lands of the monastery, made the vassals obey her by dint of blows, and threatened always, if she returned to the monastery, to throw the abbess over the walls. King Childebert, the Count of Poitou, and the bishops of the province of Lyons, interfered in turn without any better success. This lasted for a whole year, The cold of winter constrained the rebels to separate, for they had no other shelter than the church, where they could not make a sufficient fire to keep themselves warm.[143]

They establish themselves in the abbatial church, and expel the bishops from it.

[143] "Vado ad parentes meos reges . . . quia non ut filiæ regum, sed ut

Discords, however, arose between the two cousins, who each assumed to be leader, by her right as a princes of the blood royal. But Chrodield maintained her supremacy; she took advantage of it to adopt still more violent measures, and sent her troop of bandits against the monastery. They made their way into it by night, with arms in their hands, forcing the doors with axes, and seized the abbess, who, helpless with gout, and scarcely able to walk, was roused by the noise to go and prostrate herself before the shrine which enclosed the true cross. They dragged her, half naked, to the church of St. Hilary, and shut her up there, in the portion inhabited by Basine. Chrodield gave orders to poniard her upon the spot, if the bishop or any other person endeavored to set her at liberty. After this she pillaged her ancient monastery from top to bottom; many nuns were wounded, and the servants faithful to the abbess were killed upon the very sepulchre of Radegund. Basine, wounded by the pride of her cousin, took advantage of the neighborhood of the captive abbess to attempt a reconciliation with her; but it was without result. New violence.

These battles and murders continued at a still greater rate, until finally the kings Gontran of Burgundy, and Childebert of Austrasia, uncle and cousin of the two principal culprits, resolved to put an end to this disgraceful scandal. They convoked the bishops anew; but Gregory of Tours declared that they could on no account assemble till sedition had been suppressed by the secular arm. Then the Count of Poitiers, supported apparently by the entire population of the town, made a formal attack upon the basilica built by Radegund, which had been transformed into a citadel. It was in vain that Chrodield ordered a sortie of her satellites, and that, seeing them repulsed, she advanced to meet the besiegers, the cross in her hand, crying, "Do nothing to me, for I am a queen, daughter of a king, cousin and niece of your kings: do nothing to me, or the time will come when I shall avenge myself." Her person was respected. But her bravoes were seized and executed in various ways. Defeat of the rebels. Then the bishops proceeded, in the very church which had been thus delivered, to sit in judgment on the contest. Chro-

malarum ancillarum genitæ in hoc loco humiliamur. . . . Pedestri itinere . . . anhelæ et satis exiguæ. . . . Nequaquam, sed ad reges ibimus. . . . Quia reginæ sumus, nec prius in monasterium nostrum ingrediemur, nisi abbatissa ejiciatur foras. . . . Cum effractis capitibus. . . . Minans ut . . . abbatissam de muro projectam terræ dejiceret. . . . Propter penuriam ligni . . ." — Greg. Turon., *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. ix. c. 39, 43.

dield, who was not cast down by her defeat, constituted herself the accuser of the abbess; she reproached this poor bedridden gouty woman with having a man in her service dressed like a woman, with playing dice, eating with secular persons, and other still less serious imputations. She complained at the same time that she and her companions had neither food nor clothing, and that they had been beaten. The abbess defended herself without difficulty; the two princesses were obliged to confess that they had no capital crime, such as homicide or adultery, to allege against her; whilst the bishops reminded them that some of the nuns of their own party had fallen into sin, in consequence of the disorder into which their leaders had plunged them. Notwithstanding, they refused to ask pardon of the abbess — threatened loudly, on the contrary, to kill her.[144] The bishops then declared them excommunicated, and re-established the abbess in the monastery of which she had been deprived. Even then the rebel princesses did not submit: they went to their cousin, King Childebert, and denounced the abbess to him as sending daily messages to his enemy Fredegund. He was weak enough to recommend his cousins to the bishops who were about to meet for a new council at Metz. But there Basine finally separated from her cousin; she threw herself at the feet of the bishops, asked their pardon, and promised to return to St. Croix of Poitiers, to live there according to the rule. Chrodield, on the contrary, declared that she would never set foot in it while the abbess remained there; and the result was, that they permitted her to live near Poitiers on an estate given her by the king.

This confused contrast of so many crimes and so many virtues; these monks, whose charity to their neighbor was only equalled by their severity to themselves, and these bandits commanded by debauched nuns; these daughters of Frank and German kings, some transfigured by faith and poetry, while others were suffering or inflicting the most infamous outrages; these kings by turns ferocious and amiable; this great bishop standing near the tomb of his immortal predecessor, and preaching order and peace to all; these murders and sacrileges face to face with the impassioned worship of

[144] "Statim cum gladio percute. . . . Nolite super me, quæso, vim inferre, quæ sum regina, filia regis, regisque alterius consobrina. . . . Sed vulgus parvipendens. . . . Contra comitem et plebem. . . . Quas credebamus innocentes monachas nobis protulerunt prægnantes. . . . De ejus interfectione tractarent, quod publice sunt professæ." — Greg. Turon., *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. x. c. 16.

the most venerable relics; the boldness and long impunity of crime side by side with so many prodigies of fervor and austerity; in a word, this mingled crowd of saints and villains, offers the most faithful picture of the long combat waged by Christian dignity and Christian virtue against the violence of the Barbarians, and the vices of the Gallo-Romans enervated by long subjection to despotism. Monks and nuns were the heroes and instruments of that struggle. It lasted for two centuries longer before it gave way to the luminous and powerful age of the first Carlovingians, and was renewed at a later period under new forms and against new assailants.

In the same year which saw all Gaul south of the Loire disturbed by this scandal, the famous monastery of Luxeuil, founded by a Celtic missionary, St. Columba, and destined to become for a time the monastic metropolis of the Frank dominions, came into being at the other extremity of the country, at the foot of the Vosges, between the Rhone and the Rhine. Here we must hereafter seek the centre of monastic life in Gaul, and study the action of the monks upon the kingdom and people of the Franks.

V. — THE MONKS AND NATURE.

The Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. — ISA. li. 3.

But before we study the action of the great Celtic missionary upon the kingdom and people of the Franks, it is important to observe one of the distinct characteristics of the monastic occupation of Gaul. We should greatly deceive ourselves did we suppose that the monks chose the Gallo-Roman cities or populous towns for their principal establishments. Episcopal cities like Poitiers, Arles, or Paris, were not the places which they preferred, nor in which they abounded most. They were almost always to be found there, thanks to the zeal of the bishops who sought and drew them to their neighborhood. But their own proper impulse, their natural instinct, I know not what current of ideas always swaying them, led them far from towns, and even from the fertile and inhabited rural districts, towards the forests and deserts which then covered the greater part of the soil of our country.

They took special delight in such situations, where we

behold them in close conflict with nature, with all her obstacles and dangers; and where we find all that exuberant vigor and life which everywhere distinguishes the springtime of monastic institutions, and which for two centuries renewed a kind of Thebaid in the forests of Gaul.

However, between that sombre and wild nature of Europe, transferred from the oppressing grasp of Rome to that of the Barbarians, and the unwearied activity of the solitaries and religious communities, there was less a laborious struggle than an intimate and instinctive alliance, the warm and poetic reflection of which animates many a page of the monastic annals. Nothing can be more attractive than this moral and material sympathy between monastic life and the life of nature. To him who would devote sufficient leisure and attention to it, there is here a delightful field of study which might fill a whole life. We may be pardoned for lingering a moment on this fascinating subject, confining ourselves, however, to so much only as concerns the monks of Gaul in the sixth and seventh centuries.

Spread of desolation.

When the disciples of St. Benedict and St. Columba came to settle in Gaul, most of its provinces bore an aspect sadly similar. Roman tyranny and taxation in the first place, and then the ravages of the Barbarian invasions, had changed entire countries into desert and solitary places. That *pagus* which, in the time of Cæsar, had furnished thousands of soldiers against the common enemy, now showed only some few inhabitants scattered over a country allowed to run waste, where a spontaneous and savage vegetation disputed all attempts at culture, and gradually transformed the land into forests. These new forests extended by degrees to the immense clumps of dark and impenetrable wood, which had always covered an important part of the soil of Gaul.[145] One example, among a thousand, will prove the advance of desolation. Upon the right bank of the Loire, five leagues below Orleans, in that district which is now the garden of France, the Gallo-Roman *castrum* of Magdunum, which occupied the site of the existing town of Meung, had completely disappeared under the woods, when the monk Liephard directed his steps

St. Liephard at Meung-sur-Loire.

505.

[145] This question has been exquisitely treated by M. Alfred Maury, in his great work entitled *Les Forêts de la France dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Age*, inserted in vol. iv. of the memoirs presented to the Academy for Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres. I owe to him several of the details and quotations which follow.

there, accompanied by a single disciple, in the sixth century; in place of the numerous inhabitants of former times, there stood only trees, the interlaced branches and trunks of which formed a sort of impenetrable barrier.[146] And thus also Columba found nothing but idols abandoned in the midst of the wood, upon that site of Luxeuil which had formerly been occupied by the temples and the baths of the Romans.[147]

Gaul covered with forests from the fifth to the seventh century.

These famous Druidical forests in which the sacrifices of the ancient Gauls were celebrated, and which were consecrated by the worship of old trees, so universally practised by all pagan antiquity from the banks of the Ganges to those of the Tiber; these eternal shades which inspired the Romans with superstitious terror, had not only preserved but even extended, their formidable empire. The fidelity of the picture drawn by the singer of Pharsalia was more than ever apparent after six centuries had passed:—

> "Lucus erat longo nunquam violatus ab ævo,
> Obscurum cingens connexis aera ramis,
> Et gelidas alte submotis solibus umbras.
> Hunc non ruricolæ Panes, nemorumque potentes
> Silvani, Nymphæque tenent, sed barbara ritu
> Sacra Deum, structæ diris altaribus aræ . . .
> Arboribus suus horror inest." [148]

Where there had not been sufficient time to produce these immense forest-trees whose tops seem to reach the clouds,[149] or these woodland giants which testified to the antiquity of primitive forests, cultivation and population had not the less disappeared before a lower growth of wood. Certainly magnificent pines, such as those that crown the heights of the Vosges and the sides of the Alps, or oaks, the fallen

[146] "Est autem mons in Aurelianensi pago . . . in quo ab antiquis castrum fuerat ædificatum, quod *crudeli Wandalorum vastatione* ad solum usque dirutum est. Nemine autem remanente habitatore, *memoribus hinc inde succrescentibus*, locus idem qui claris hominum conventibus quondam replebatur, in densissimam redactus est solitudinem. Cujus abstrusa latibula venerabilis Liephardus petiit." — Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 145. Compare the following passage in the life of St. Laumer: "Secessit in locum quem olim priscorum habitatorum manus extruxerat, sed jam vastitas succrescentium frondium et totum obduxerat." — *Ibid.*, p. 325.

[147] "Ibi imaginum lapidearum densitas vicina saltus densabat." — Jonas, *Vit. St. Columbani.*

[148] Lucan., *Pharsal.*, lib. iii. 399.

[149] "Erat silva *longum nunquam violata per ævum*, cujus arborum summitas pene nubes pulsabat." — *Vit. S. Sequani*, c. 7. The words underlined show that the monastic writer of the seventh century knew his Lucan by heart.

trunks of which could scarcely be moved by forty men, like that which the Abbot Launomar cut down in the vast forest of Perche, were not to be seen everywhere;[150] but the fertile soil was everywhere usurped by copsewood, where the maple, the birch, the aspen, and the witch-elm, prepared the ground for a more imposing growth of trees, and, still worse, by thickets of thorn and brambles of formidable extent and depth, which arrested the steps and tortured the limbs of the unfortunates who ventured there.[151] These intermediate regions between the great forests and the fields, between the mountains and the cultivated plains, were with too much justice entitled *deserts*, because the population had abandoned them till the monks brought back fertility and life. In the northern part of the country, occupied by the Burgundians, on the north of the Rhone alone, six great deserts existed at the end of the sixth century, — the desert of Reome, between Tonnerre and Montbard; the desert of Morvan; the desert of Jura; the desert of the Vosges, where Luxeuil and Lure were about to have birth; the desert of Switzerland, between Bienne and Lucerne; and the desert of Gruyere, between the Savine and the Aar.[152] Indeed, the whole extent of Switzerland and Savoy was little else than a vast forest, the name of which alone remains, applied in French to the canton of Vaud (*Pagus Waldensis*) and in German to the four primitive cantons of Lucerne, Schwitz, Uri, and Unterwald (*Die Waldstätten*), where a border of impenetrable wood surrounded the beautiful lake which unites them.[153] Advancing towards the north, the wooded regions became more and more profound and extensive. Even in the provinces least depopulated and best cultivated, through the most favorable soils and climates, long wooded lines extended from north to south, and from the rising to the setting sun, connecting the great masses of forest with each other, sur-

The desert of Gaul.

[150] "Vasta tractus Perticæ solitudines. . . . Annosam quercum. . . . Immensæ molis. . . . Tanti ponderis ut vix a quadraginta viris portaretur." — Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. pp. 318, 324.

[151] *Spinæ et vepres:* In almost every life of the holy founders of monasteries we find mention of these vegetable enemies. Thence also the names of several abbeys, *Roncereium*, the Ronceray, at Angers; *Spinetum*, afterwards Boheries; *Spinosus locus*, Espinlieu; *Spinalium*, Epinal, and other local names which are to be found in almost all our provinces: *L'Epine, L'Espinay, La Roncière, Le Roncier, La Ronceraye.*

[152] See the excellent map of the first kingdom of Burgundy, by Baron Roget de Belloguet, ap. *Mémoires de l'Acad. de Dijon*, 1847–48, p. 313.

[153] *Wald* in German means at the same time *forest* and *mountain;* it is the *saltus* of the Latins. See Maury, op. cit.

rounding and enveloping Gaul as in a vast network of shade and silence.

We must then imagine Gaul and all the neighboring countries, the whole extent of France, Switzerland, Belgium, and both banks of the Rhine — that is to say, the richest and most populous countries of modern Europe — covered with forests such as are scarcely to be seen in America, and of which there does not remain the slightest trace in the ancient world. We must figure to ourselves these masses of sombre and impenetrable wood, covering hills and valleys, the high table-land as well as the marshy bottoms; descending to the banks of the great rivers, and even to the sea; broken here and there by watercourses which laboriously forced a way for themselves across the roots and fallen trees; perpetually divided by bogs and marshes, which swallowed up the animals or men who were so ill-advised as to risk themselves there; and inhabited by innumerable wild beasts, whose ferocity had scarcely been accustomed to fly before man, and of which many different species have since almost completely disappeared from our country.

The monks in the forests.

To plunge into these terrible forests, to encounter these monstrous animals, the tradition of which remains everywhere, and whose bones are still sometimes exhumed, required a courage of which nothing in the existing world can give us an idea. In all that now remains to be conquered of American forests and deserts, the modern adventurer penetrates armed with all the inventions of industry and mechanical art, provided with all the resources of modern life, sustained by the certainty of success, by the consciousness of progress, and urged forward by the immense pressure of civilization which follows and sustains him. But at that time no such help came to the monk, who attacked these gloomy woods without arms, without sufficient implements, and often without a single companion. He came out of a desolated, decrepid, and powerless old world, to plunge into the unknown. But he bore with him a strength which nothing has ever surpassed or equalled, the strength conferred by faith in a living God, the protector and rewarder of innocence, by contempt of all material joy, and by an exclusive devotion to the spiritual and future life. He thus advanced, undaunted and serene; and often without thinking what he did, opened a road to all the benefits of agriculture, labor, and Christian civilization.

See, then, these men of prayer and penitence, who were at

the same time the bold pioneers of Christian civilization and the modern world; behold them taming that world of wild and savage nature in a thousand different places. They plunged into the darkness carrying light with them, a light which was never more to be extinguished; and this light, advancing step by step, lighted everywhere those home-fires which were so many beacons upon the way to heaven, — "from glory to glory," [154] and which were to be centres of life and blessing for the people whom they instructed and edified: "In thy light shall we see light." [155]

They entered there, sometimes axe in hand, at the head of a troop of believers scarcely converted, or of pagans surprised and indignant, to cut down the sacred trees, and thus root out the popular superstition. But still more frequently they reached these solitudes with one or two disciples at the most, seeking some distant and solitary retreat, out of the way of men, where they might be allowed to devote themselves entirely to God.

No obstacle nor danger arrested them. The more awful the profound darkness of the forest, the more were they attracted to it.[156] When the only paths were so tortuous, narrow, and bristling with thorns, that it was impossible to move without tearing their clothes, and they could scarcely plant one foot after another in the same line, they ventured on without hesitation. If they had to creep under the interlaced branches to discover some narrow and gloomy cavern obstructed by stones and briers, they were ready to do it. It was when approaching, on his knees, such a retreat, which the beasts of the forest themselves feared to enter, that the Burgundian priest Sequanus addressed this prayer to God: "Lord, who hast made heaven and earth, who hearest the prayers of him who comes to thee, from whom everything good proceeds, and without whom all the efforts of human weakness are vain, if thou ordainest me to establish myself in this solitude, make it known to me, and lead to a good issue the beginning which thou hast already granted to my devotion." Then, feeling himself inspired and consoled by his prayer, he commenced at that very spot the cell in which originated the abbey and existing town of St. Seine.[157]

St. Seine in Burgundy. 580.

[154] 2 Corinth. iii. 18. [155] Ps. xxxvi. 9.

[156] "Inter opaca quæque nemorum et lustra abditissima ferarum." — *Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 9.

[157] "Callis quidam artuosus . . . tantum angustus, atque sentuosus, ut . . . vix pedem pes sequeretur, impediente densitate ramorum . . . vesti-

Where a natural cavern was wanting, they constructed some shelter, a hut of branches or reeds ;[158] and if there were several, an oratory with a little cloister. Sometimes they hollowed out a cell in the rock, where the bed, the seat, and the table were all cut of the living stone. Sometimes (like St. Calais in a desert of Maine) meeting in the depth of the wood the remains of some ancient forsaken buildings, they transformed them into cells and chapels, by means of branches woven between the fragments of ruined wall.[159]

When the course of the liturgy led them to that magnificent enumeration of the victories of patriarchal faith, made by St. Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, in which he represents Abraham waiting with confidence in the tents of exile for the eternal city, whose maker and builder was God,[160] they might have applied to themselves that sacred text, "Dwelling in tabernacles." They might well say that their dwelling-places were the *tabernacles*, that is to say, the tents, the cells of exile. At night, lying upon their stone pallets, and during the day protected against every interruption by the thick foliage and inaccessible passes, they gave themselves up to the delights of prayer and contemplation, to visions of a future life in heaven.

Sometimes, also, the future destiny of those great works, of which unawares they sowed the seed, was instinctively revealed to their thoughts. St. Imier heard the bells of the monastery which was one day to replace his hermitage echoing through the night. "Dear brother," he said to his only companion, "dost thou hear that distant bell that has already waked me three times?" "No," said the servant. But Imier rose, and allowed himself to be guided by this mysterious sound across the high

St. Imier and Rauracie. — 610.

mentorum discerptione. . . . Tunc se curvantes solo tenus. . . . Ita implicitæ inter se ramorum frondes . . . ut ipsius etiam feræ formidarent accessum. . . . Ad squalidam silvam. . . . Extemplo parvæ cellulæ in quo loco genua ad orationem fixerat fundamenta molitus est." — *Vit. S. Sequani*, c. 7, 8, ap. Act. S. O. SS. B., t. i.

[158] "Tugurio frondibus contexto." — *Vita S. Launom.*, c. 7. "Cellulam sibi virgis contexens." — *Vita S. Lifardi*, c. 3. "De virgultis et frondibus construxere tugurium. Quod claustro parvulo ejusdem materiæ circumcingentes." — *Vita S. Ebrulfi*, c. 8.

[159] "In altitudine eremi. . . . Reperit . . . parietes vetusti ædificii senio labentes, dignitatem tamen pristinam ipsius operis vestigiis protestantes. . . . Cellulam intra parietinas supradicti ædificii vimine lento contexit." — *Vita S. Karilefi*, c. ii.

[160] "Dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." — Hebr. xi. 9, 10.

plateau and narrow gorges of the valley of Doubs, as far as the gushing fountain, where he established himself, and which has retained his name to the present time.[161] Elsewhere in that Limousin, which was so celebrated for the number and austerity of its solitaries, Junian, the son of a companion of Clovis, abandoned everything at the age of fifteen, to take shelter in an unknown cell on the banks of the Vienne; he left it only to pray in the depths of the wood in the shade of a great hawthorn-tree. Under this blossomed tree they buried him after forty years of that holy and wild life, and the hawthorn disappeared only to make room for a monastery, which was the origin of the existing town of St. Junian.[162]

St. Junian in Limousin.

The principal aim of all these monks was not to form communities in the forests. They sought only solitude there; they would rather have lived as anchorites than as cenobites. Some, and a great number, after having founded or lived in monasteries, according to the rule of the life in common, aspired to a more perfect existence, and to end their career as St. Benedict had begun his, in some cavern unknown to men. St. Benedict himself had inscribed at the head of his Rule that, to be a good anchorite, it was necessary first to have learned how to strive against the devil under the common rule and with the help of the brethren: this was, according to him, an apprenticeship necessary before engaging in what he calls single combat against the temptations of the flesh and the thoughts.[163] Others still more numerous yielded to the overpowering attraction which led them to the depths of the forests, not only to escape from the discussions, violences, and cruel wars, of which every Christian of

[161] "Per novem annos breve illud quod quievit super rupes jacuit. . . . Culmen montis ascendit. . . . Per sonitum campanæ. . . . Audisne, mi frater, signum quod ego audio? Nequaquam." — *Breviar. MS. de la Bibl. de Berne*, ap. TROUILLAT, *Monuments de l'Evêché de Bâle*, i. 37. The town of St. Imier is at the present time one of the most flourishing centres of watchmaking in the Bernois Jura.

[162] "In quodam ipsius silvæ cacumine . . . subter quamdam arborem quæ spina dicitur, et in vulgari nostro *aubespi* nuncupatur." — MALEU, *Chron. Comodoliacense*, p. 14, ed. Arbellot, 1848. Compare GREG. TUR., *De Glor. Confess.*, c. 103. We have already distinguished this St. Junian from another saint of the same name, abbot of Mairé in Poitou, and friend of Radegund. See p. 492.

[163] "Qui non conversionis fervore novitio, sed monasterii probatione diuturna, didicerunt contra diabolum, multorum solatio jam docti, pugnare; et bene instructi fraterna ex acie ad singularem pugnam eremi, securi jam sine consolatione alterius, sola manu vel brachio contra vitia carnis vel cogitationum, Deo auxiliante, sufficiunt pugnare." — *Reg.*, c. i.

that period was the witness and too often the victim, but to flee from contact with other men, and to enjoy silence, peace, and freedom.

This, however, was a vain hope. Their solitude soon inspired too much envy, and their austerity to much admiration, to be long respected. Happy were they who heard only the cries of the wild beasts echoing round their cells: —

> "Nunc exoriri gemitus iræque leonum
> Vincla recusantum, et sera sub nocte rudentum
> Sævire, ac formæ magnorum ululare luporum."

Often, in fact, when they celebrated the nocturnal service in their chapels, thatched with green leaves or rushes, the howls of the wolves accompanied their voices, and served as a response to the psalmody of their matins.[164] But they feared much more the step and voice of men. Sometimes in the middle of the night, the voluntary exile, who had hid himself here in the hope of remaining forever forgotten or unknown, hears some one knock at the door of his hut. It is at first only a reverential and timid tap; he is silent, thinking it a temptation of the devil. It continues: he opens and asks, "What would you with me? Why do you pursue me into my solitary dwelling? Who are you?" He is answered, "A poor sinner, or a young Christian, or an old priest weary of the world."[165] "But what would you with me?" "Be saved like you, and with you: learn from you the way of peace and of the kingdom of God." This unexpected and undesired guest must be admitted. The next morning, or the next again, comes another; and they are followed by others still. The anchorites saw themselves thus changed into cenobites, and monastic life established itself involuntarily and unexpectedly amid the most distant forests.

The anchorites of the woods transformed into cenobites against their will.

Besides, it was vain to flee from solitude to solitude; they were pursued, seized upon, surrounded, and importuned incessantly, not only by disciples ambitious of living, like them, in silence and prayer, but by the surrounding populations themselves. Reassured and trustful, growing familiar in their

[164] "In primis ibidem construxit oratorium de virgultis. . . . Frequenter contigit, sicut ipse nobis referre solebat, quod nocturnis temporibus, dum in capella virgea matutinos cantabat, lupus e contra de foris stabat, et quasi psallenti murmurando respondebat." — Order Vital., lib. iii. p. 132, ed. Leprevost.

[165] "Fores ipsius cellulæ lento et suavi ictu reverenter pulsare cœpit. . . . Putans pulsationem hujusmodi ex illusione dæmoniaca processisse." — *Chron. Commod.*, lib. c.

turn with the gloomy arches, where these men of peace and blessing, of labor and charity, had gone before them, they followed in their track; and when they had discovered the hermits, kept up a continued assault, some bringing offerings, others asking alms, prayers, or advice, all seeking the cure of all the troubles both of soul and body. The rich came like the poor, whenever they were afflicted by the hand of God or man. The widows and orphans, the lame and blind, the paralytic and epileptic, the lepers, and, above all, the possessed, appeared in a crowd, in quest of a virtue and knowledge equally supernatural to their eyes.

Concourse that they attracted in the woods.

The solitaries withdrew with modesty from the exercise of the supernatural power attributed to them. When the Abbot Launomar, who being at first a shepherd, had become a student, then a cellarer of a monastery of Chartres, and lastly, an anchorite in the great desert of Perche, which then attracted many lovers of solitude,[166] was discovered, and approached by a crowd of petitioners, among whom was a distressed father who brought his crippled son to be cured — "You ask too much," said he, "of a sinful man." The same sentiment animated the noble Maglorius, one of the Breton missionaries, and the successor of Samson, at Dol. After having abdicated his bishopric to live as a hermit in the isle of Jersey, which Childebert, as has been already seen, bestowed upon a Breton monastery, the lord of a neighboring isle, rich in a hundred ploughs, as says the legend, and possessing innumerable fishing-boats, came to ask this saint to restore her speech to his only daughter, who, despite her rich inheritance and rare beauty, could not find a husband because she was dumb. "My son," answered Maglorius, "torment me not: that which you ask is beyond the power of our weakness. When I am sick, I know not whether I am to die or be cured. How, then, having no power over my own life, should I be able to take away any of the other calamities permitted by God? Return to your house, and offer abundant alms to God, that you may obtain from him the cure of your daughter." He ended, however, by yield-

St. Laumer in Perche.

About 590.

St. Magloire in Armorica and in Jersey.

[166] "Inter opaca nemorum. . . . Vasta tectus Perticæ solitudine." — *Vit. S. Launomari*, c. 5 et 6. "Vastas expetunt Pertesi saltus solitudines." — *Vit. S. Karilefi*, c. 9. Compare *Vit. S. Leobini*, c. 6. "Grandem ab homine peccatore poscis rem: tamen nostras sumens eulogias reduc ad propria filium tuum . . . quibus acceptis sanum reduxit filium."

ing to the entreaties of the father, who gave him a third part of all his possessions, and by obtaining this miracle from God.[167]

The same Maglorius, in leaving his bishopric for solitude, found himself pursued by a crowd so numerous and eager for instruction and consolation, and at the same time so lavish of gifts and alms, that he was in despair. He told his grief, with his face bathed in tears, to his successor in the see of Dol. "No," said he, "I can no longer remain within reach of all these people: I will fly and seek some inaccessible place, where men have never penetrated, nor can penetrate, where no human steps can follow me." The bishop listened in silence, and permitted him to pour out all his grief for some hours; then he mildly reproved him, and showed him that he could not deny to the poor of Christ the true seed of spiritual life, nor refuse to take upon himself the sweet burden of the people's sorrows, for which God would render him a hundred-fold. Maglorius listened and obeyed him: and shortly, in place of the solitary cell he had dreamt of, found himself at the head of a community of sixty-two monks.[168]

Among the leudes and other possessors of the soil, there were also many to whom gratitude for health restored, or admiration of the virtues displayed by the monks, suggested the thought of associating themselves with their merits and courage by territorial grants, and especially by the concession of these forests of which they were nominally the lords and proprietors, and which they willingly gave up in favor of the servants of God, who had colonized them. Such, among a thousand others, was Ragnosvinthe, a man of illustrious family, and master of vast territorial possessions in the neighborhood of Chartres; being apprised that the Abbot Launomar had come to establish himself in a corner of his lands, once inhabited, but since

Gifts of the leudes.

[167] "Hausit speciem carnis ab arce alti sanguinis. . . . Ad prædicandum populo ejusdem linguæ. . . . Qui licet terram, ut aiunt, centum pene verteret aratris. . . . Divitem censum non sine magno dolore alieno servabat hæredi. Huic unica filia jam nubilis et nimia pulchritudine. . . . Sed quia officio linguæ . . . destituta . . . a nullo sub nomine dotis expetebatur. . . . Fili, noli mihi molestus esse, nam hoc quod requiris non est nostræ fragilitatis." — *Vita S. Maglorii*, c. 1, 3, 29.

[168] "Irrigata facie lacrymis, qualia et quanta a multitudine vulgi perpessus est retulit. . . . Pro certo noveris me hinc impromptu egressurum, et ad locum ubi nulla existunt hominis vestigia. . . . Hinc recedere et abrupta expetere. . . . Spiritualis alimoniæ pauperibus Christii qua illis vivere est triticum. . . . Horum populorum molestias circa te exagitatas perspicere debes onus leve." — *Vita S. Maglorii*, c. 10 et 11.

swallowed up in the forest, the leude, inspired by the love of Him whose image he venerated in the man of God who had become his guest, transferred to him the perpetual possession of a wooded district, the limits of which were carefully marked out.[169]

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Some accepted, others refused.

The monks did not refuse these gifts when they came from a legitimate and natural source. But we must not believe that they were ready to receive all that came to them from every hand; for the same Launomar, to whom another noble, feeling himself sick to death, had sent forty sols of gold as the price of the prayers he asked, sent them back at once, suspecting that this sum was the produce of the rapine which the dying man had practised. In vain the bearer of this gift followed him even into his oratory, under pretence of praying with him, and placed the pieces of gold on the altar, taking care to show them, and weigh one by one to make their value apparent. "No," said the abbot, "take back your money, and return to your master; say to him from me, that this money is ill-gotten, that it cannot either prolong his life or change the sentence of God against his sins. God will not have sacrifices produced by rapine. Let your master make haste to restore what he has taken from others, for he shall die of this disease. As for us, by the goodness of Christ, we are rich enough, and, as long as our faith stands fast, we shall want nothing." [170]

Discontent sometimes excited by these gifts.

However, in spite of this reserve, men were not wanting whom these generous gifts inspired with jealous discontent. Even in Armorica, where devotion towards the monks seemed native to the very soil, with the faith of which these monks were the first apostles, chiefs of the highest rank yielded to this sentiment, and expressed it loudly. The Briton Malo, who had devoted the numerous gifts which he received to endow a monastery of

[169] "Vir illustris, satis locuples et latissimorum fundorum possessor. . . . Tactus amoris ejus igne, quem in Dei homine artius venerans attendebat, tradidit ei locum in quem vir sanctus ingressus fuerat . . . et de jure suo in ejus dominationem perpetuo transfudit ipsi et posteris ejus . . . quem etiam propriis finibus optime undique determinavit." — *Vita S. Launom.*, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 324.

[170] "Vir nobilis Ermoaldus nomine. . . . Sed devotus miles Domini accipere recusabat. . . . Perge cito, fili. . . . Pecunia hæc mortem divinamque nequit prohibere sententiam, eo quod illius acquisitio injuste facta sit; pro se laboret, quia morietur. . . . Pecunia ista, o homo! iniqua est. . . . Qui Deo sacrificium de rapina parat. . . . Nuntia domino tuo, ut injuste sublata restituet. . . . Nos Christo propitio bonis omnibus abundamus, et, si fide non infirmamur, nihil nobis deerit." — *Vita S. Launom.*, pp. 320, 325.

seventy monks attached to his episcopal church, was forced to leave his diocese and emigrate a second time, before the outcries of those who denounced him as an invader, who intended to bewitch the whole province, and leave no inheritance to the inhabitants or their descendants.

The monks and the brigands.

Recruits, or importunate followers of another kind, often came to trouble their solitude. The condition of Gaul was but too well adapted to encourage the formation and prolonged existence of the habits of brigandage, which have kept their ground in many modern countries through all the progress of civilization, and which are still to be found in our own day in Spain and Italy. Some contented themselves with stealing the tools of the solitary who had no other wealth, or depriving him of the single cow which he had taken with him; but, more frequently, they aimed even at the life of the intruders. The forests were the natural resort of these bands of brigands, who lived by theft, and who did not recoil from murder when they could thus rob their victims more completely. They could not without rage see the monks disputing the possession of their hitherto uncontested domain, penetrating farther than they themselves could do, and in such a way as always to defeat their greediness, by entangling those who followed them in bewildering complications of the way.[171] And they were always tempted to believe that these strange guests went either to bury or to seek hidden treasure. The Abbot Launomar, whose legend unites so many incidents of the forest-life of the monastic founders, found himself one morning surrounded by a troop of bandits, who had spent all the night in seeking for him. But when they saw him appear upon the threshold of his hut of branches, they were afraid, and fell at his feet, praying his pardon. "My children," he said, "what do you ask of me? What came you to seek here?" And when they had confessed their murderous intention, he said to them, "God have pity on you! Go in peace. Give up your brigandage, that you may merit the mercy of God. As for me, I have no treasure here below. Christ is my only treasure."[172]

St. Launomar in the forest of Perche.

[171] "Bovem a præsepio solventes abduxerunt. . . . Latrunculi . . . nusquam aditum invenientes quo se de solitudine invia foras extrahere possent." — *Vita S. Launom.*, c. 20.

[172] "Per totam noctem . . . errantes ut eum interficerent. . . . Putabant illum aliquam pecuniam in deserto servare. Diluculo autem facto, vident se repente in conspectu ejus . . . sub parvo tugurio. . . . Parce nobis, vir

The monks almost always thus disarmed the brigands by their goodness, gentleness, and venerable aspect; they led them to repentance, and often even to monastic life, taking them for companions and disciples.

St. Seine in Burgundy. About 580.

Sequanus, whose tranquil courage and fervent piety we have already narrated, had been warned that the borders of the impenetrable forest into which he was about to venture were occupied by bands of assassins, who were even called anthropophagi. "No matter," he said to one of his relatives, who imagined himself the owner of this region, and who gave him this information; "show me only the road by which to reach it; for if my desires are dictated by a divine instinct, all the ferocity of these men will change into the mildness of the dove." And, in fact, when they understood that he had established himself near their caverns, and when they had seen him, the wolves became lambs; they even became laborers to serve and aid him and his, to cut down the neighboring trees, to dig the foundations and build the walls of his monastery.[173]

St. Evroul in Neustria. 517-596.

Whilst this occurred near the sources of the Seine, similar events were taking place not far from its mouth. Ebrulph, a noble Neustrian lord, had given up conjugal life and the favor of kings to betake himself to the wild solitudes of the forest of Ouche, in the *Pagus Oximensis*,[174] which was the hiding-place of numerous brigands. One of these met him: "Oh, monk!" he said, "what can bring you into this place? Do you not see that it is made for bandits and not for hermits? To dwell here you must live by robbery and the wealth of others. We will not tolerate those who would live by their own labor; and besides, the soil is barren; you may take pains to cultivate it, but it will give you back nothing." "I come," answered the saint, "to weep for my sins; under the protection of God I fear the menaces of no man, nor yet the hardships of any labor. The

Dei, parce. . . . Filioli, ut quid parci vobis petitis? Cessite a latrociniis. . . . Pecunia vero nostra Christus est." — Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. pp. 318, 322.

[173] "Est mihi locus hereditario, ni fallor, jure perdebitus, sed loci illius finitimi, bestiarum more, carnibus humanis ac cruoribus depascuntur. . . . Mihi locum monstra. . . . Erat quippe spelunca latronum. . . . Ex lupis quasi oves facti sunt. . . . Instabant structores operis ii qui advenerant finitimi, pars fundaminis consolidare juncturas . . . pars umbrosæ silvæ nemora detruncare." — *Vit. S. Sequani*, c. 7, 8.

[174] This name was afterwards translated by the word *Hiesmois*, and was used to designate an archdeaconry of the diocese of Seez. — J. Desnoyers, *Topogr. Ecclés. de la France au Moyen Age*, p. 166.

Lord knoweth how to spread a table for his servants in the wilderness; and thou thyself, if thou wilt, mayst seat thyself at it with me." The brigand said nothing, but returned next day to join Ebrulph with three loaves baked under the ashes and a honeycomb: he and his companions became the first monks of the new monastery, afterwards celebrated under the name of its holy founder.[175] The place from which all men fled soon became the refuge of the poor; alms took the place of robbery, and to such an extent, that one day when a beggar had been sent away because the new-born community had only half a loaf remaining, Ebrulph sent after him to give him that half, trusting for himself and his brethren to the alms of heaven. They wanted so little from him that he was able to found and govern fifteen other monasteries.[176]

The monks and the hunters.

These were not, however, the only encounters or the sole intercourse which their voluntary exile in the woods procured to the monks of the Merovingian age. At the other extremity of the social scale they excited the same feelings of surprise and sympathy. They were perpetually found out and disturbed by kings and nobles, who passed in the chase all the time which was not occupied in war. All the Franks of high rank and their trusty followers gave themselves up to that exercise with a passion which nothing else in their life surpassed. In the vast forests which covered Gaul they found, not only an inexhaustible supply of game, but, above all, animals of size and force so formidable as to offer them all the perils and emotions of war. The elan, the buffalo, the bison, and especially the *urus* (*Auërochs*), so famous for its ferocity, were adversaries worthy of the boldest combatant or the most warlike prince. But there, in the midst of the forest, Religion awaited them; and while they thought only of sport, and of pursuing the deer, she raised before them imposing and unexpected sights

[175] Ouche, or St. Evroul, in the diocese of Lisieux; in Latin *Uticum*, *Uticense*.

[176] "Admodum nobili ortus prosapia. . . . Nobilitatis lampade clarus, mox innotuit Chlotario regi . . . cæteris prælatus maximum in palatio obtineret locum. . . . Quæ silva densitate arborum horribilis, crebris latronum discursibus. . . . O monachi! quæ turbationis causa nostras partes coegit adire? . . . An nescitis quia hic est locus latronum et non heremitarum? . . . arva infructuosa, vestraque labori ingrata invenistis. . . . Non habeo, inquit (minister), nisi dimidium panis quem reservo servulis nostris. Nam cætera secundum jussum tuum erogavi. . . . Cito curre et largire. . . . Accipe, Domine, eleemosynam quam tibi abbas misit. . . . Ecce ante solis occasum quidam clitellarius pro foribus cellulæ visus est, pane et vino sufficienter onustus." — Orderic Vital., lib. vi. pp. 609, 612.

which filled them with emotion and respect. Sometimes the spectacle of these solitaries, vowed to the service of God, was enough to convert to monastic life the cavalier who came upon them suddenly when he reckoned upon striking his prey with spear or javelin. Such was the case with Bracchio, a young Thuringian huntsman, attached to the person of the Frank Duke of Auvergne, and perhaps brought, like Radegund, from his native land, after the conquest of Thuringia by that same son of Clovis who had listened to and honored the slave Portianus.[177] This Bracchio, still savage like his name, which signifies a *bear's cub*, passed his life hunting in the vast oak woods which still covered the north of Auvergne. In hot pursuit of an enormous boar, he was led one day to the threshold of the hermitage in which a noble Auvergnat, named Emilian, whom even the wild animals had learned to respect, lived as an anchorite. The dogs stopped short and dared not attack the boar; the young hunter alighted from his horse, saluted the old man, and sat down to rest by his side. The Gallo-Roman opened his arms to the German, and spoke to him of the infinite sweetness of solitude with God. The Bear's cub listened and left him without replying, but already decided in his heart. Soon after he applied himself to learn reading and writing seeking instruction for that purpose from the priests and monks whom he met on his road. At the end of three years he could read the Psalter. Then, his master having died, he went to join Emilian, who bequeathed to him his hermitage, from which he was taken to re-establish relaxed discipline at Menat, in that ancient monastery, the mutilated church of which is still admired on the picturesque banks of the Sioule.[178]

Bracchio, in Auvergne.

529.

576.

But the most frequent result of these encounters were gifts and foundations suggested to the munificence of princes and great men by recollection of the various and deep impressions left upon their souls by the language and aspect of these men of peace and prayer, buried in the depth of the

[177] See above, page 459.

[178] "Nomine Bracchio, quod in eorum lingua interpretatur *ursi catulus* . . . puer discernit non sine grandi admiratione quod aprum, quem inchoaverat sequi ferum, in conspectu senis mansuetum adstare videbat ut agnum." — Greg. Turon., *Vitæ Patr.*, c. 12. Menat is now a district country-town of Puy-de-Dôme. The remains of the Abbey of Menat, restored in the seventh century by St. Ménelé, consist of a church still beautiful and curious, which was happily preserved from a modern restoration, between 1843 and 1847, by the intelligence and devotion of the curate, M. Maison.

woods. Their intervention in favor of the animals pursued by these powerful hunters, and the right of asylum, so to speak, which they had established for the game in their neighborhood, almost always led to incidents which, told long after, were transformed and embellished at pleasure, and which, engraved upon the popular memory, associated themselves by an indissoluble link with the fame and greatness of numerous monasteries whose origin is traced back to these sylvan traditions.

Right of asylum for the game near the monks.

While the chiefs and dependents of the Gallo-Frank aristocracy visited only by intervals, and for the mere pleasure of destruction, the shades under which the entire life of the monks was passed, these recluses naturally lived in a kind of familiarity with the animals which they saw bounding around them, whose instincts and habits they studied at their leisure, and which, in course of time, they easily managed to tame. It might be said that, by a kind of instinctive agreement, they respected each other. In the numberless legends which depict monastic life in the forest, there is not a single example of a monk who was devoured or even threatened by the most ferocious animals; nor do we ever see that they betook themselves to the chase, even when urged by hunger, by which they sometimes suffered to extremity. How, then, can we wonder that, seeing themselves pursued and struck by pitiless strangers, these animals should seek refuge with the peaceful guests of that solitude which they inhabited together? and how can we fail to understand why Christian nations, accustomed for ages to find shelter and protection with the monks from every violence, should love to recall these touching legends which consecrate, under a poetical and popular form, the thought, that the dwelling of the saints is the inviolable refuge of weakness pursued by strength?" [179]

St. Calais and his buffalo.

540.

One of the first and most curious examples of these relations between the king and the monks, in which the woodland animals served as intermediary influences, is that of Childebert and the holy abbot Karileff. Karileff was a noble Auvergnat, who, having first been led to Menat, and then become the companion of St. Avitus and St. Mesmin at Micy, in the Orleannaise, had ended

[179] M. Charles Louandre, in an article entitled the *Epopée des Animaux* (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, of the 15th December, 1853), has perfectly entered into and described the relations of the monks with the wild animals in the forests of Gaul.

by taking refuge with two companions in a fertile glade in the woods of Maine. Cultivating this unknown corner of the earth, he lived surrounded by all kinds of animals, and, among others, by a wild buffalo, an animal already rare in that country, and which he had succeeded in taming completely. It was a pleasure, says the legend, to see the old man standing by the side of this monster, occupied in caressing him, gently rubbing him between his horns or along his enormous dewlaps and the folds of flesh round his strong neck; after which the animal, grateful, but faithful to its instinct, regained at a gallop the depths of the forest.

Childebert and Ultrogoth.

Childebert, the son of Clovis, is, as we have already said, the great hero of monastic legends. He must have loved the chase as passionately as any of his ancestors or successors, for in almost all the legends which mention him he is occupied in this pursuit. Arriving in Maine, with Queen Ultrogoth, to pursue his ordinary sport, he heard with joy that a buffalo, an animal almost unknown by that time, had been seen in the neighborhood. All is arranged next day that this extraordinary chase may have full success; the bows and arrows are prepared in haste, the trail of the beast sought at break of day, the dogs first held in leash, then slipped, and giving voice with full mouth; the historian of the solitary gives us all the details with the gusto of a practised hunter. The terrified buffalo fled to take refuge near the cell of his friend, and when the huntsmen approached they saw the man of God standing beside the beast to protect it. The king was told of it, and, hastening forward indignant, cried in a furious tone, when he saw Karileff in prayer and the buffalo tranquil beside him, "How are you so bold, unknown wretches, as to invade thus an unconceded forest of my domain, and to trouble the greatness of my hunting?" The monk attempted to calm him, and protested that he had come there only to serve God apart from men, and not to despise the sovereign authority or disturb the royal game. "I order thee," answered the king, "thee and thine, to leave this place instantly; woe to thee if thou art found here again!" Having said this he went away scornfully; but had scarcely taken a few steps when his courser stopped short; in vain he struck his spurs deep into the bleeding flanks of the horse; he could not advance a step. A faithful servant warned him to calm himself. Childebert listened to him, returned towards the saint, and, alighting, received his blessing, drank of the wine of a little

vineyard which the solitary had planted near his cell, and, though he found the wine bad enough, kissed the venerable hand that offered it, and ended by bestowing all the lands of the royal treasury in that neighborhood upon him, that he might build a monastery there. The saint at first refused the donation, but at length accepted as much ground as he could ride round in a day, mounted on his ass; and in this enclosure rose the abbey from which has come the existing city of St. Calais.[180]

Returning to the queen, Childebert told her his adventure. Ultrogoth, already much interested in the monks, was eager in her turn to see the holy recluse. She sent to ask his permission to visit him, promising, if he consented, to give him full possession of the entire domain of which he occupied only a part. But Karileff obstinately refused her request. "As long as I live," he said to the envoy of the queen, "I shall never see the face of a woman, and no woman shall ever enter my monastery. And why should this queen be so desirous of seeing a man disfigured by fasts and rural labors, soiled and covered with stains like a chameleon? Besides, I know the deceptions of the old enemy: we must needs defy, even in the horror of the desert, temptations which made Adam lose Paradise, with the happiness of life and his intercourse with God. Say then to the queen that I will pray for her, but that it does not become a monk to sell the sight of his face to a woman, and that, as for her lands, she must give them to whom she will. Say to her that the monks have no need of great possessions, nor she of my blessing; all that she can hope to have from us, her servants, she will have, remaining in her own house."[181]

[180] "Parentibus secundum seculi dignitatem clarissimis ortus. . . . Locus tantummodo feris eremique familiarissimis animantibus pervius. . . . Erat spectabile videre bubulum, qui in ea provincia difficile est inventu. . . . Lento ungue setas inter cornua mulcentem, nec non colli toros atque palearia tractantem. . . . At ferus hoc contractatu velut benedictione donatus præpeti cursu vastas repetebat solitudines. . . . Signa ejus itineris diu rimata reperiunt . . . acres molossos funibus absolvunt . . . canum latratui credentes. . . . Invenimus in quodam tugurio hominem nobis incognitum . . . post tergum illius adstantem bubulum. . . . Unde vobis, o incognitæ personæ! tanta præsumptionis audacia, ut ausi sitis . . . nostræ venationis dignitatem . . . mutilare. . . . Est aliquid vini quod parva vitis hic inventa atque exculta elicuit. . . . Poculum rex . . . pro dantis dignitate potius quam pro sui sapore suscepit." — SIVIARDUS, *Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 4, 14, 20.

[181] "Omnia fisci illius, in cujus parte resident, ei attribuam. . . . Unde talia reginæ ut tantopere me videre exoptet diutinis chamelcontis coloribus incultum. . . . Non decet nos . . . vendere nostrum mulieribus aspectum. . . . Fisci sui partem cui libuerit attribuat." — *Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 28. Compare YEPES, *Coronic. General.*, t. i. pp. 193, 195.

St. Marculph and his hare.

The same Childebert, softened and reconciled to the habits of the monks, appears in the legend of St. Marculph, that brave abbot of Cotentin, whose exploits against the Saxon pirates, and friendship with the King of Paris, we have already seen.[182] Before his death, the Abbot of Nanteuil went to ask from the king a confirmation of all the numerous gifts which the monasteries founded by him had already received. As he approached Compiègne, where Childebert then resided, and while he rested from the fatigues of his journey in a field upon the bank of the Oise, the king's huntsmen passed him, pursuing a hare. The animal, after many doubles, took refuge under the robe of the abbot. At this sight one of the hunters addressed him rudely: "How darest thou, priest, lay hands upon the king's game? Restore the hare, or I will cut thy throat." Marculph released the hare; but the dogs all at once became motionless, the brutal huntsman fell from his horse, and in falling was seriously injured. At the prayer of his companions in the chase, the saint raised him up and healed him. Then the king, who was hunting in another direction, having heard what had occurred, went to meet his friend, alighted whenever he perceived him, asked his blessing, embraced him tenderly, led him to the castle of Compiègne to spend the night, and granted him all that he asked, in an act of which Queen Ultrogoth and all the royal vassals present were the witnesses and sureties.[183]

About 559.

St. Gilles and his doe.

The name of a certain Childebert is also connected in some versions of a famous legend with the memory of one of those holy abbots who were so popular in the middle ages, not only in France, but everywhere, and especially in England and Germany. A young Greek of illustrious birth, named Ægidius,[184] had come, following the steps of Lazarus and of the Magdalene, to the shores of the Mediterranean, and, landing near the mouth of the Rhone,

[182] Page 463.

[183] "Qua temeritate, clerice, venationem regis invadere præsumpsisti? Redde eam, alioquin meo gladio interibis. . . . Ex equo quem calcaribus utrimque fodiens ut fugientem consequeretur corruens. . . . Mutuis sese complexibus diu deosculati. . . . Castrum pariter intraverunt prædictum . . . præsentibus regina Ultrogode cæterisque suis optimatibus omnibus attestantibus." — Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 124.

[184] We have transformed this into St. Gilles: in English, St. Giles, whose name is borne by a multitude of parishes, and by one of the most populous quarters of London. In Germany, St. Ægidius is counted among the fourteen saints specially invoked in all cases of distress, under the name of Auxiliary Saints, *Die Vierzehn Nothhelfer*.

had grown old in solitude, hidden in the depths of a vast forest, without any other nourishment than the milk of a doe which lay in his grotto. But one day as the king of the country, named, according to some, Childebert, King of the Franks, and to others, Flavian, King of the Goths,[185] was following the chase in this forest, the doe was started and pursued into the cavern by the hunters; one of them drew an arrow upon her, which struck the hand which the solitary raised to protect his companion. The king, touched, as these wild but simple natures almost always were, by the sight of this grand old man, almost naked, caused the wound to be dressed, returned often to see him, and at last made him consent to the erection of a monastery upon the site of his grotto, of which he became abbot, and where he died in great sanctity. Such was, according to popular tradition,[186] the origin of that celebrated and powerful abbey of St. Gilles, which became one of the great pilgrim shrines of the middle ages, and gave birth to a town, the capital of a district whose name was borne with pride by one of the most powerful feudal races, and which retains still a venerable church, classed among our most remarkable monuments of architecture and sculpture.

The British abbess Nennok and the stag which took refuge in the choir of the nuns.

We meet the same incident in the legend of St. Nennok, the young and beautiful daughter of a British king, who gave up a husband whom her father wished to bestow her upon, in order to emigrate to Armorica, and devote herself to monastic life. The prince of the country, pursuing a stag in the neighborhood of her monastery, saw the animal, half dead with fatigue, take refuge within the holy enclosure, upon which the hounds stopped short, not daring to go farther. Alighting from his horse and entering the church, he found the stag couched at the feet of a young abbess, amid the choir of nuns who were singing the service. He not only granted the animal its life, but himself remained in the community for a whole week, and at the end of that time laid upon the altar an act of donation, granting the surrounding lands to the monastery, with the addition of three hundred horses

[185] No such name is known among the Gothic kings: the Bollandists suppose it to refer to King Wamba, who reigned from 672 to 680.

[186] Mabillon (*Annal.*, t. i. p. 99), and especially the Bollandists (vol. i. Sept.), have issued long dissertations upon the times of St. Ægidius. He has generally been considered as contemporary with St. Cæsarius of Arles, in the sixth century. The Bollandists say the seventh century, and prolong his life to the time of Charles Martel.

and mares, and three hundred head of cattle.[187] It is easy to perceive in this history the popular translation of a more natural incident, of the asylum offered by the abbess Nennok to another daughter of a British king, whom her husband, out of love for monastic life, had forsaken, and who, setting out to seek him through Armorica, had been pursued by a licentious noble, and had found shelter only in the cell of her husband, from whence she passed to the monastery of Lan-Nennok in Plemeur.[188]

St. Desle and Clotaire II. — 620.

It will be seen hereafter how Clotaire II., when he became master of the Frank monarchy, and was hunting in one of the royal forests of Sequania, pursued an enormous boar into the oratory inhabited by an old Irish monk, Deicolus, who had come to Gaul with St. Columba; and, touched by seeing this ferocious beast lying before the little altar where the recluse stranger was at prayer, the king made a donation to him of all the land belonging to the royal treasury in the neighborhood of his cell. When the donation was made and accepted, the man of God, who had stipulated that the life of the boar should be saved, took care to let him go free, and to protect his flight into the wood.[189]

The great feudal vassals, as passionately fond of the chase as were the kings, and as much occupied with it, yielded, like them, to the influence of the monks when the latter appeared before them to protect the companions of their solitude. Basolus, born of a noble race in Limousin, and founder of the monastery of Viergy,[190] in the hill country of Reims, having built a cell in the depth of the forest, sheltered by a stone cross, and where his whole furniture consisted of a little lettern admirably sculptured, to bear the Holy Scriptures on which he meditated unceasingly, was one day disturbed in his devotions by a great boar, which laid itself at his feet, as if to ask mercy for its life. Following the animal, came on horseback

St. Basle and his boar. — 570-620.

[187] "Cervus ipse fere extinctus lassitudine, ad ecclesiam sanctæ Dei famulæ conjungit. . . . Dux et ipse veniens descendit . . . cernensque in medio psallentium . . . sanctimonalium choro, ante beatæ pedes virginis mansuefactam bestiam jacuisse." — Bolland., t. i. Junii, p. 410.

[188] Albert le Grand, *Vie de St. Efflam*, p. 705.

[189] "Singularem maximumque aprum . . . mitis viri Dei cellam ingreditur . . . ante altare accubare. . . . Viri Dei jussione absque ullius læsione consueta cum impetu petiit lustra." — *Vita S. Deicoli*, c. 13.

[190] *Viriziacum* — the same which afterwards took the name of St. Basle. This Basolus must not be confounded with the Arverne chief, prisoner of Clovis, and saved by his daughter, who has been mentioned before, page 459.

one of the most powerful lords of the neighborhood, Attila, whom the mere glance of the solitary brought to a standstill, and rendered motionless. He was a good man at bottom, says the legend, though a great hunter: he evidenced this by making a gift to the abbot of all he possessed round the cell. Four centuries after, this tradition remained so fresh, that by an agreement, scrupulously observed, the game hunted in the forests of Reims was always spared, both by the dogs and hunters, when it could reach the little wood over which the cross of St. Basle rose.[191]

And it was not only from man, but from other animals that the compassionate solitaries protected the creatures whom they had accepted as guests of their solitude.

St. Laumer and his doe.

Launomar, of whom we have already quoted several anecdotes, was wandering in his forest of Perche, chanting psalms, when he encountered a doe flying from some wolves. He saw in this the symbol of a Christian soul pursued by devils: he wept for pity, and then cried to the wolves, "Cruel wretches, return to your dens, and leave this poor little animal; the Lord wills that she should be snatched from your bloody fangs." The wolves stopped at his voice, and turned back upon the road. "See, then," said he to his companion, "how the devil, the most ferocious of wolves, is always seeking some one to devour in the Church of Christ." However the doe followed him, and he passed two hours in caressing her before he sent her away.[192]

Supernatural empire of the monks over the animals.

The ancient authors who record these incidents, and many others of the same kind, are unanimous in asserting that this supernatural empire of the old monks over the animal creation is explained by the primitive innocence which these heroes of penitence and purity had won back, and which placed them once more on a level with Adam and Eve in the terrestrial Paradise. The rage of the ferocious beasts, says one, is subdued into

[191] "Natu et genere nobilissimus. . . . Inter condensa silvarum fruteta . . . quæ crux integerrima ibi permanet usque in præsentem diem. . . . Lectoriolum ligneum sculpturæ artis pulcherrima specie compositum. . . . Quidam præpotens . . . venandi gratia (ud illud genus est hominum) . . . sicut erat vir bonus. . . . Hispida bellua quasi vitæ suæ imploratura præsidium. . . . Extunc mos inolevisse . . . et usque hodie observatur, ut si . . . quælibet fuerit venatio, postquam illius intra aggestum silvulæ." — Adso (992), *Vita S. Basoli*, c. 7, 22, 23.

[192] "Cruenti persecutores, ad ergastula revertimini . . . hanc vestris eruet illæsam rictibus. . . . Desistite persequi hanc bestiolam. . . . Quam palpans homo Dei manu suâ post duas horas remisit." — Act. SS. O. B., t. i. pp. 319, 324.

obedience to him who lives the life of the angels, as it was to our first parents before the fall.[193] The dignity, says another, which we had lost by the transgression of Adam was regained by the obedience of the saints, although the world was no more an Eden to them, and they had to bear the weight of all its distresses. Our first father received from the Creator the right of naming every living creature, and subduing them to his will. "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Was it not by the same right that the beasts of the forest obeyed and attached themselves to these holy men like humble disciples?[194] Is it wonderful, says Bede, that he who faithfully and loyally obeys the Creator of the universe, should, in his turn, see all the creatures obedient to his orders and his wishes?[195] Two thousand years before Redemption, in the solitudes of Idumea, it had been predicted of the just man reconciled to God that he should live in peace with the wild beasts. "And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee."[196]

Miracles in history.

The dignity of history loses nothing by pausing upon these tales, and the pious trust supported by them. Written by a Christian, and for Christians, history would lie to herself if she affected to deny or ignore the supernatural intervention of Providence in the life of the saints chosen by God to guide, console, and edify his faithful people, and, by a holy example, to elevate them above the bonds and necessities of terrestial life. Certainly, fables are sometimes mixed with truth; imagination has allied itself to authentic tradition to alter or supersede it; and there have even been guilty frauds which have abused the faith and piety of our ancestors. But justice had been done on these by the jealous and learned criticism of those great masters of historic science whom the religious orders have furnished to the world, long before the systematic disdain and adventurous theories of our contemporary authorities had profited by some inexactitudes and exaggerations, to throw back the whole of Catholic tradition into the rank of those semi-historic, semi-poetic mythologies, which precede every incomplete civilization. There is not a writer of authority among us

[193] *Vita S. Launom.*, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 319.

[194] *Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 23.

[195] "Qui enim auctori omnium creaturarum fideliter et integro corde famulatur, non est mirandum si ejus imperiis ac votis omnis creatura deserviat." — Bede, in *Vita S. Cuthb.*, c. 13.

[196] Job v. 23.

who would hesitate to repeat these fine expressions of a true Christian philosopher: "Some men have supposed it a mark of great piety to tell little lies in favor of the articles of religion. That is as dangerous as it is useless: they thus run the risk of making men doubt what is true out of hatred for that which is false; and besides, our piety has so many truths to nourish it that lies exist at their expense, like cowardly soldiers in an army of brave men." [197]

All Christian writers have spoken and thought thus; but their minds have been no less influenced by the sentiment which dictated to Titus Livius, a pagan of the age of Augustus, these noble words, which no Christian pen would disavow: "I am not ignorant that the vulgar spirit which does not desire the interference of the gods in present affairs is opposed to the publication of the wonders of the past; but whilst I narrate the things of old, it appears to me that my heart itself enters into the period of which I write; I feel that religious respect constrains me to reproduce in my annals what so many wise men have thought it their duty to collect for posterity." [198]

[197] "Fuere qui magnæ pietatis loco ducerent mendaciola pro religione confingere: quod et periculosum est, ne veris adimatur fides propter falsa, et minime necessarium; quoniam proprietate nostra tam multa sunt vera, ut falsa tanquam ignavi milites atque inutiles oneri sint magis quam auxilio." — Ludov. Vives, *De Tradendis Discipulis*, lib. v.

[198] "Non sum nescius ut eadem negligentia qua nihil Deos portendere vulgo nunc credant, neque nuntiari admodum ulla prodigia in publicum, neque in annales referri; cæterum et mihi, vetustas res scribenti, nescio quo pacto antiquus fit animus: et quædam religio tenet, quæ illi prudentissimi viri publice suscipienda consuerint, ea pro dignis habere, quæ in meos annales referam." — Tit. Liv., lib. xliii. c. 13.

I may be permitted to quote here a fine passage, which has not been sufficiently admired, from Count de Maistre: —

"With regard to *mythology*, hear us still further. Without doubt, all religion *gives rise* to a mythology; but do not forget, dear Count, what I add to that statement, that the *mythology of the Christian religion is always chaste, always useful, and often sublime*, without it being possible, by a particular privilege, to confound it with religion itself. . . . Hear, I pray you, a single example; it is taken from I know not what ascetic book, the name of which has escaped me: —

"A saint, whose very name I have forgotten, had a vision, in which he saw Satan standing before the throne of God, and, listening, he heard the evil spirit say, 'Why hast thou condemned me, who have offended thee but once, whilst thou savest thousands of men who have offended thee many times?' God answered him, 'Hast thou ONCE asked pardon of me?'

"Behold the Christian mythology! It is the dramatic truth which has its worth and effect independently of the literal truth, and which even gains nothing by being fact. What matter whether the saint *had* or *had not* heard the sublime words which I have just quoted? The great point is to know that *pardon is refused only to him who does not ask it.* St. Augustine has

The Church, however, could not be answerable for those errors or falsehoods which have crept into some legends. She obliges no one to believe any of these prodigies, even the best verified which we find related in them. But when such events are recorded by serious authors, and especially by contemporaries, the Church, herself founded upon miracles, acknowledges and commends them to the admiration of Christians, as a proof of the faithfulness of His promises, who has said of himself, that "He will be glorified in his saints," and that "he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do."

It is, then, both just and natural to register these pious traditions, without pretending to assign the degree of certainty which belongs to them, or, on the other hand, to put limits to the omnipotence of God. They will not disturb the minds of those who know the legitimate necessities of nations accustomed to live specially by faith, and what are the riches of divine mercy towards humble and faithful hearts. Touching and sincere echoes of the faith of our fathers, they have nourished, charmed, and consoled twenty generations of energetic and fervent Christians during the most productive and brilliant ages of Christendom. Authentic or not, there is not one which does not do honor to human nature, and which does not establish some victory of weakness over strength, or good over evil.

It is certain, besides, that to our forefathers, to the Gallo-Franks, from whom we have the honor of being descended, the miracle seemed one of the most ordinary and simple conditions of the action of God upon the world.[199] The marvels which we have related were received by them as the natural result of innocence restored by sacrifice. To the eyes of recently converted nations, dazzled by so many great and holy examples, even when their faith remained dull and their manners ferocious, a man completely master of himself became once more master of nature. And the animals who approached these marvellous men were themselves transformed, and attained to a clearer intelligence and more lasting gentleness. All kinds of attaching qualities, and natural

said, in a manner not less sublime: *Dost thou fear God? conceal thyself in his arms* (Vis fugere a Deo? fuge ad Deum). To you, my dear Count, this is perhaps as striking; but for the crowd much is necessary. I say *perhaps*, for, be it said between ourselves, all the world is commonplace on this point; and I know no person whom dramatic instruction does not strike more than the finest morals of metaphysics." — *Lettres*, t. i. p. 235.

[199] Dom Pitra, *Histoire de St. Léger*, p. xcii.

relations with the existence of men who isolated themselves from their fellow-creatures to live in community with nature, were found in them. Whilst the monastic doctors found pleasure in seeking subjects of instruction, or analogies with the conditions and trials of religious life,[200] in the peculiarites of their instincts and habits, more or less faithfully observed, the faithful united in attributing to the holy monks, as companions, servants, and almost friends, familiar animals whose society peopled their solitude, and whose docility lightened their labors. This intelligence and sympathy with the animals, as with all animate nature, is a distinctive characteristic of the monastic legend. Antique fables may sometimes reappear there, but always to be transfigured to the advantage of a holy belief or a difficult virtue.

The monks of the Thebaid and the wild animals.

And the most authentic narratives confirmed these pious traditions. In that history of the Fathers of the Desert which was commenced by St. Athanasius and St. Jerome, there are a thousand incidents, more or less well established, which show us the most ferocious animals at the feet of Anthony, Pacome, Macarius, Hilarion, and their emulators. At each page are to be seen the wild asses, the crocodiles, the hippopotami, the hyænas, and especially the lions, transformed into respectful companions and docile servants of these prodigies of sanctity; and the conclusion drawn is, not that the animals have reasonable souls, but that God glorified those who devoted themselves to his glory by showing thus how all nature obeyed man before he was shut out from Paradise for his disobedience. Let us confine ourselves to the touching history of Gerasimus, the Christian Androcles, abbot of a monastery on the banks of the Jordan, who had drawn a thorn out of the foot of a lion, and whom the grateful animal would never abandon. The terrible beast was, after a fashion, received as a member of the community: he lived upon milk and boiled herbs like the monks; he drew water from the Jordan for the wants of the monastery; and when the old abbot died the lion followed him to his grave and died there, howling with grief.[201]

Gerasimus and his lion.

[200] See the curious tract of S. Pierre Damien, *De Bono Religiosi Status et Variarum Animantium Tropologis* (op. 52), in which he draws an example of monastic virtue from the habits of all the animals, real or fabulous, with which the natural history of his times (such as was set forth in the *Bestiaires*, the *Physiologus*, &c.) had made him acquainted.

[201] "Venit leo in monasterium et quærebat senem suum. . . . Dicebant ei: Migravit senex ad Dominum. . . . Et stans abbas Sabbatius supra sepul-

The Gaul, Sulpicius Severus, who must be regarded as the most ancient of our religious annalists, and who had studied monastic institutions in the East, confirms in his *Dialogues* all that Eastern writers have said on this subject. He relates the facts of which he himself had been witness in the Thebaid: how, in traversing the desert, he had seen the monk who accompanied him offer the fruit of the palm to a lion whom they met, which he ate quietly and peaceably like any domestic animal; and how, in the hut of another solitary, a she-wolf appeared regularly every evening at the supper-hour, and waited at the door till she was called to eat the remains of the little repast, after which she licked the hand of her host, who caressed her familiarly.[202]

St. Martin and his plungeons. 316-397.

Sulpicius Severus wrote, when he had returned into his own country, the life of St. Martin, the first apostle of cenobitical life in Gaul. He there relates that the great bishop, visiting his diocese and walking along the banks of the Loire, followed by a numerous crowd, perceived the aquatic birds named plungeons pursuing and devouring the fish. "Behold," said he, "the image of the devil: see how he lays his snares for the imprudent, how he devours them, and how he is never satisfied." And immediately he commanded these aquatic birds to leave the waters in which they swam, and to dwell henceforth in the desert. At his voice, says the historian, and to the great admiration of the multitude, the birds, obeying him, came out of the river, and flew in a body to the skirts of the neighboring forests.[203]

Who does not remember the raven who, according to St. Jerome, carried a half-loaf every day to the hermit Paul, and who brought him a whole one the day that Anthony went to

crum abbatis Gerasimi dixit leoni: Ecce hic senex noster sepultus est: et inclinavit genua supra sepulcrum senis. . . . Cum ergo id leo audisset et vidisset . . . tunc et ipse prostravit se . . . et rugiens ita continuo defunctus est super sepulcrum senis." — Joan. Moschus, *De Vit. Patr.*, lib. x. p. 894.

[202] "Habebam unum ex fratribus ducem locorum peritum. . . . Fera paululum modesta. . . . Accepit tam libere quam ullum animal domesticum; et cum comedisset, abscessit. . . . Alium æque singularem virum vidimus in parvi tugurio. . . . Lupa ei solita erat adstare cœnanti . . . panem qui cœnulæ superfuisset. . . . Manu blanda caput triste permulcet." — Sulp. Sever., *Dial.*, i. c. 7.

[203] "Cum suo illo, ut semper frequentissimo . . . comitatu, mergos in flumine conspicatur. . . . Forma, inquit, hæc dæmonum est. . . . Ita grege facto omnes in unum illæ volucres congregate . . . non sine admiratione multorum." — Sulp. Sev., *Epist.*, iii. The popular name of *Martins-pêcheurs* given to these birds is probably derived from this legend.

visit him? Like his great brethren in the East, the patriarch of the Western monks had also his familiar bird, which, however, came to receive its food instead of bringing food to him. St. Gregory the great, in his biography of Benedict, records that, while still at his first monastery of Subiaco, a raven from the neighboring forest came to the saint at every meal and was fed out of his own hand.[204]

St. Benedict and his raven. — 492-508.

These tales, piously recorded by the highest genius which the Church has possessed, prepare us to listen without surprise to many other traits of the familiar intimacy of the monks with the inferior creatures.

Sometimes wild sparrows, as the legend goes, came down from the trees to gather grains of corn or crumbs of bread from the hand of that Abbot Maixent before whom Clovis knelt, on his return from his victory over Alaric; and the nations thus learned how great was his humility and gentleness.[205] Sometimes other little woodland birds came to seek their food and to be caressed by that Walaric who will shortly appear before us as one of the most illustrious disciples of St. Columba, the apostle of Ponthieu, and the founder of the great monastery of Leuconaus. Charmed with this gentle company, when his disciples approached, and when the larks fluttered terrified round him, he stopped the monks while still at a distance, and signed to them to draw back. "My sons," he said, "do not frighten my little friends, do them no harm: let them satisfy themselves with what we have left."[206] On another occasion Karileff, when binding up and pruning his little vineyard, the poor produce of which he had offered to King Childebert, stifled by the heat, had taken off his frock and hung it upon an oak; and when, at the end of the hard day's labor, he took down his monastic habit, he found that a wren, the smallest and most curious bird in our climate, had nestled there and laid an egg. The holy man was so touched with

The monks and the birds in Gaul. — Maixent. — Walaric. — Karileff.

[204] "Ad horam refectionis illius ex vicina silva corvus venire consueverat, et panem de manu ejus accipere." — S. Greg. Magn., *Dial.*, ii. 8.

[205] "Multoties aves feræ relictis nemorum ramis. . . . Cum indomiti passeres in dextera illius mensæ reliquias colligebant, mansuetudinem et sanctitatem ejus populi compererant." — *Vita S. Maxent.*, c. 3; Act., t. i. p. 561.

[206] "Ut . . . articulis suis quandocumque vellet, oblitas suæ feritatis et quasi domesticas eas palparet. . . . Circumquaque volitantes aves. . . . Filii, non faciamus eis injuriam, sed permittamus eas paullulum satiari de micis." — *Vita S. Walarici*, c. 26.

joy and admiration, that he passed the whole night in praising God.[207] A similar anecdote is related of St. Malo, one of the great monastic apostles who has left his name to a diocese in the northern part of Armorica; but with this difference, that the latter permitted the bird to continue in his mantle till her brood was hatched.[208] Tradition becomes more and more blended with the dreams of imagination in proportion as it penetrates back into Celtic legends: one of which records that when Keivin, another Breton monk, prayed with his hands extended, the birds laid their eggs there.[209]

Malo.

Maglorius and his fishes.

The animals naturally sought and preferred to dwell in the domains of masters who were so gentle and paternal; from which arises the amusing story of the monk Maglorius and Count Loiescon. This rich Armorican count, whom Maglorius had cured of leprosy, made him a gift of the half of a great estate, bathed by the sea. Maglorius having come to take possession, all the birds which filled the woods on the estate, and all the fishes which inhabited its shore, precipitated themselves in a troop towards the portion which came to the monk, as if declaring that they would have no other lord but him. When the count, and particularly his wife, saw the half of the estate which they retained thus depopulated, they were dismayed, and insisted that Maglorius should exchange with them. But when the exchange was made, the birds and fishes immediately followed Maglorius, going and coming, so as always to keep in the portion of the monks.[210]

Sites of monasteries pointed out by animals.

And it was the animals who spontaneously indicated the predestined sites of great monastic foundations. In relating the history of the martyr monk, St. Leger, we shall see the position of Fecamp, on the Neus-

[207] "Vitem circumfodiendo et superflua quæque resecando. Sudore laboris coacto, vestimentum quod Cucullam vocant. . . . Avicula perexigua, cujus vocabulum est bitriscus, dum . . . juxta familiarem sibi consuetudinem intima quæque quadam curiositate perluserat. . . . Inæstimabile gaudium cum admiratione mixtum eum occupavit." — *Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 12.

[208] "Dimisit cappam donec, fotis ovis, pullos in tempore excluderet avicula." — Sigeb. Gemblac., *Vita S. Maclovii*, c. 15, ap. Sur., t. vi. p. 378. Compare Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 180.

[209] Ozanam, *Etudes Germaniques*, t. ii. p. 96.

[210] "Comes valde divitiarum opibus obsitus . . . qui multam in medios erogaverat substantiam. . . . Multitudo copiosa avium miræ magnitudinis et pulchræ . . . captura ingens piscium congeries . . . partem S. Maglorii, ipsius præsentiæ ac si Domino suo debitæ servitutis obsequium præstans, expetiit." — Mabillon, Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 212.

trian coast, which served him both as a prison and asylum, pointed out to the Duke Ansegise by a stag which he was hunting.

St. Thierry and the white eagle.

It was told in Champagne, that when Theodoric, the son of a famous bandit, but himself almoner and secretary to St. Remy, the great apostle of the Franks, desired to found a house which he might himself retire to, and was seeking a site for it, he saw a white eagle hovering in the air, which seemed to mark out by its slow and circular motion the enclosure of the future monastery; after the erection of the famous abbey, which took the name of St. Thierry, this miraculous eagle appeared in the same place every year.[211]

In the following century, St. Nivard, Archbishop of Reims, visiting his diocese on foot, arrived in the fine country which overlooks the course of the Marne, opposite Epernay; and, finding himself fatigued, slept under the shade of a great beech, on the knees of his companion, Berchaire. During his sleep he saw a dove descend from heaven upon the tree, and, after marking the same circuit three times by flying round it, reascend to the skies. Berchaire, who had not slept, saw the same vision. They agreed to build an abbey there, which was called Hautvillers. Berchaire was its first abbot; and the high altar rose upon the same spot where the tree had stood when the dove alighted,[212] a sweet symbol of the tranquil innocence which was to reign there.

Foundation of Hautvillers.

662-670.

Domestication of the wild animals by the monks.

But a still closer degree of intercourse between the monks and animated nature appears in the annals of these early ages. Innumerable are the legends which show these wild animals obedient to the voice of the monks, reduced to a kind of domestic condition by the men of God obliged to serve and follow them. We shall have to tell, from contemporary narratives, how the illustrious founder of Luxeuil, St. Columba, in traversing the forests of the southern Vosges, saw the squirrels descend from the trees, to leap upon his hands and hide themselves in

[211] "Mittitur de sublimibus aliger in similitudinem aquilæ Angelus. . . . Intelligunt devoti cultores Dei continuo divinum esse missum." — Act. SS. O. S. B., *sæc.* i. t. i. p. 597. Compare Frodoard, *Hist. Remens.*, i. 24; Baugier, *Mémoires Hist. de Champagne*, t. i. p. 32.

[212] Act. SS. O. S. B., *sæc.* ii. t. ii. p. 802; Baugier, p. 48. — Similar anecdotes are related of the foundation of Montfaucon and Avenay, in the same canton. This Berchaire is the same monk of Luxeuil who afterwards founded Montier-en-Der, in the south of Champagne.

the folds of his cowl; how he made the bears obey him; and how he passed with safety through troops of wolves, who rubbed against his dress without daring to touch him.[213]

St. Corbinian and his bear.

The same legends are to be found on the coast of Armorica as on the banks of the Danube. Now it is Corbinian, the Frank monk who founded the bishopric of Freysingen, and who, crossing the Tyrol to go to Rome, obliged the bear who had killed one of his baggage-horses to take upon his own back the burden of his victim, and thus to accompany him to Rome.[214] Now it is Samson, the metropolitan of Dol, who, seeing his monks disturbed by the cries of the wild birds, collected them all together one night in the court of the monastery, imposing silence upon them, and the next morning dismissed them, forbidding them to recommence their cry, an interdiction which "they observed inviolably."[214a] Now it is Renan, the anchorite of Cornouaille, who commanded a wolf to give up the sheep of a poor peasant, which it was carrying away, and who was obeyed on the instant. Or, again, the blind Herve, patron of the popular singers of Armorica, whose dog had been devoured by a wolf, and who compelled this wolf humbly to take the dog's place, and secured in a leash, to accompany him in his wanderings.[215]

Celtic legends.

The wolves tamed by the monks.

St. Malo.

The wolves are everywhere to be met with, and appear again in the legend of St. Malo. Forced by his persecutors to hide himself in a solitude of Saintonge, he was discovered by the crowd attracted there to see a tame wolf, which, having devoured the ass of the solitary, came every day to seek the ass's paniers, in order to fill them with the wood which he had to collect in the forest.[216]

[213] Jonas, *Vita S. Columbani*, c. 15, 27, 30.

[214] "Mitte super eum sellam saginariam et sterne illum, et saginam super illum impone, et duc cum aliis caballis in viam nostram. . . . Impositam sibi saginam ipse ursus quasi domesticus equus Romam usque perduxit, ibique a viro Dei dimissus abiit viam suam." — Aribo, *Vita S. Corbin.*, c. 11, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. iii. An anecdote almost similar is told of St. Martin, Abbot of Vertou in Brittany, during his pilgrimage to Rome. — Act. SS. O. S. B., t. i. p. 362.

[214a] Albert le Grand, p. 423.

[215] Hersart de la Villemarqué, *Légende Celtique*, p. 264. Albert le Grand relates that St. Herve being once lodged in a manor "very much surrounded by reservoirs and fish-ponds," but in which he was much incommoded by the croaking of the frogs, he imposed on them everlasting silence, "and immediately the little creatures killed themselves, in as short a time as if they had had their throats cut." — p. 318.

[216] "Viderat quotidie lupum ad horam venire et cum clitellis quas asinus

But none of the monastic apostles of our little Brittany ever surpassed, in this respect, that Paul who has left his name to the city and diocese of St. Pol-de-Leon, and whose empire over the most ferocious animals was absolute, and of great advantage to the population. Once he compelled a buffalo, who had overthrown and broken in pieces with his horns a cell which a monk had built near the fountain where the animal came to drink, to disappear permanently in the depths of the forest. Another time, he tamed and reduced to a state of domestication a ferocious she-bear and her cubs, whose race was long marked and preserved by the country people.[217] Here it was an enormous bear, who drew back before him, till she fell into a ditch and broke her neck. There it was a crocodile or sea-serpent, who had put the count of the canton to flight with all his soldiers, whom Paul compelled to throw itself into the sea, upon that point of the coast of Cornouaille, where a whirlpool called *l'Abîme du Serpent* is still shown.[218] St. Paul de Leon.

The legend does not stop mid-way: it adds that, seeing the monastery inhabited by his sister upon the sea-shore threatened by the high tides, he made the sea draw back four thousand paces, and commanded the nuns to mark the new boundary of the waters with stones, "which, on the instant, increased into great and high rocks, to bridle the fury of the waves." It is easy to understand how, under the thatched roof of the Celtic peasant's hut, the works of embankment, which were doubtless superintended by the Breton emigrant who was the first bishop of the diocese, should be interpreted thus.

Traditions relative to the influence exercised by the monks over the wild animals, not only for their personal service, but for the advancement of their labors in the clearance and

portare solebat prout sustinere poterat ligna deferre." — *Vita S. Maclovii*, c. 18, ap. MABILLON.

[217] "Sus silvatica, ad cujus ubera sugentes dependebant porcelluli . . . ferocissima, beati viri molliter blandita, ac si prioribus annis fuit edomita, deinceps permansit domestica, ita ut per plures annos illic duraverit progenies ejus inter reliquos patriæ porcos quasi regalis et præcipua." — BOLLAND, t. ii. *Martii*, pp. 116, 117. The same incident is found in the legend of St. Imier, founder of the town of that name in the Bernois Jura. — Ap. TROUILLAT, *Monum. de l'Evêché de Bâle*, i. p. 37.

[218] *Ibid.*, p. 118. With this legend is connected the origin of the house of *Kergounadec*, a proper name which signifies, in Breton, *he who has no fear*, because its progenitor was the only individual in all the parish of Cleder who dared to accompany St. Paul in his expedition against the serpent: "quæ non magnam apud nos fidem obtinent," add the prudent Bollandists.

cultivation of the country, abound especially in Armorica and the other Celtic countries. Thegonnec, another Breton abbot, had the materials for his church carried by a wolf. And Herve, whom we have just quoted, made a wolf labor like an ox. "It was wonderful," says the legend, "to see this wolf live in the same stable with the sheep without harming them, draw the plough, bear burdens, and do everything else like a domestic animal."[219]

The stags at the service of the monks.

In this dramatic struggle of the monks with nature, the wolves, as has been seen, played the most habitual part; but the stags sometimes disputed with them the first place in these wonderful transformations. In Ireland two stags drew to its last dwelling-place the body of Kellac, hermit and bishop, assassinated by his four disciples, who, before murdering him, had kept him shut up for a whole night in the hollow of an oak which was as large as a cavern.[220] The abbey of Lancarvan, in Cambria, drew its name and origin from the memory of two stags which the Irish disciples of St. Cadok had yoked to a cart laden with wood for the monastery.[221] Colodocus, hermit and bishop, having refused to give up a stag which had taken refuge in his hermitage to the noble who pursued it, the furious hunter took away seven oxen and a cow which the solitary and his disciples used in their labors. The next morning eight stags came out of the wood, and offered themselves to the yoke to replace the cattle carried off from him who had saved the life of their companion.[222]

Colodocus.

St. Leonor and the stags in the plough.

The legend of St. Leonor follows, one of the finest pearls from the precious casket of Celtic tradition. Leonor was one of those monk-bishops who came from the British Islands in the sixth century like Samson, Maglorius, and Brieuc, to evangelize the Celts of Armorica. Having established himself in a desert position, at the mouth of the Rauce, where he and his sixty disciples could live only on the produce of the chase and fisheries, he saw one day, when praying, a little white bird settle at his feet, which carried in its beak an ear of corn. "There was, then, upon this wild waste some spot where corn could grow, where even some ears of corn were growing." The saint thanked

[219] Albert le Grand, p. 193.

[220] "In vasti roboris caudicem, ad caveæ similitudinem vacuatum, compingunt." — Bolland., t. i. *Maii*, p. 106.

[221] La Villemarqué, op. cit., p. 156.

[222] Albert le Grand, *Vie de St. Ké ou Kenan, surnommé Colodoc*, p. 677.

God, and directed one of his monks to follow the bird, who led him to a glade in the neighboring forest, where some plants of wheat had been preserved by re-sowing themselves — the last remnant, perhaps, of a rich cultivation which had disappeared from these regions with the inhabitants who brought it there. At this news the saint intoned the *Te Deum;* and the next morning, at break of day, having first sung matins, all the community took the road, with Leonor at their head, towards the forest, to cut it down. This work lasted long: the monks, overcome by fatigue, entreated their father to abandon that overwhelming task, and to seek other soil less hard to labor. He refused to listen to them, telling them it was the devil who sent to them that temptation to idleness. But it was still worse when, the forest cut down, the cleared soil had to be cultivated. Then the monks resolved to leave their leader there, and fly during the night. But they were reassured and consoled by seeing twelve noble stags coming of themselves to be yoked to the ploughs, like so many pairs of oxen. After having ploughed all day, when they were loosed in the evening, they returned to their lair in the depth of the wood, but only to return on the morning of the next day. This lasted for five weeks and three days, until the new fields were prepared to yield an abundant harvest. After which the twelve stags disappeared, carrying with them the blessing of the bishop emigrant.[223]

The Bollandists, with their habitual prudence, take care to make a protest of their incredulity with respect to these travesties of historic truth.[224] An ingenious and learned man of our own times has pointed out their true and legitimate origin. According to him, after the gradual disappearance of the Gallo-Roman population, the oxen, horses, and dogs had returned to a savage state, and it was in the forests that the British missionaries had to seek these animals to employ them anew for domestic uses. The miracle consisted in restoring to man the empire and use of the creatures which God had given him for instruments. This re-domestication of animals which had relapsed into a savage condition,

[223] "Ecce unus passer candidissimus spicam frumenti in ore tenens. . . . Cœperunt lassi deficere. . . . Pater, oramus te ut de loco isto recedas. . . . Fessi præ nimio labore. . . . Duodecim grandissimos cervos. . . . Dei virtute domesticos. . . . Benedicens dixit: Ite in pace. . . . Densissimas sylvas expetunt." — Bolland., t. i. *Jul.*, pp. 121, 125. Compare La Borderie, *Discours sur les Saints Bretons.*

[224] Comment. Præv., No. 9.

is one of the most interesting episodes in the civilizing mission of the ancient cenobites.[225]

Agricultural labors of the monks in the forests.

However, their whole existence in the forests was a series of painful and persevering labors, of which posterity and the neighboring populations were to reap the benefit. The mere clearance of the forests, undertaken successively in all quarters of Gaul, and pursued with unwearied constancy by the spade and axe of the monk, was of the greatest service to future generations. The destruction of the woods, which has now become alarming, and even in some cases a real calamity, was then the first of necessities. It was, besides, carried on with prudence and moderation Ages passed before the scarcity of wood was felt, even in the sad southern provinces, from which woodland growth seems to have disappeared forever; and during these ages the monks continued without intermission to cut down the great masses of forest — to pierce them, to divide them, to open them up, and even to make great clearings here and there, which continually increased, and were put into regular cultivation. They carried labor, fertility, human strength and intelligence into those solitudes which till then had been abandoned to wild beasts, and to the disorder of spontaneous vegetation. They devoted their entire life to transforming into rich pastures and fields carefully sown and ploughed, a soil which was bristling with woods and thickets.

It was not a pleasant, short, or easy task: to accomplish it, all the energy of wills freely submitted to faith, all the perseverance produced by the spirit of association, joined to a severe discipline, was needed. This persevering energy never failed them. Nowhere did they draw back, or restore voluntarily to the desert that which they had once undertaken to reclaim. On the contrary, we see them reach the extreme limit of human power in their field labors and the standing-ground they gained; disputing with the ice, the sand, and the rocks, the last fragments of soil that could be cultivated; installing themselves sometimes in marshes, up to that time supposed inaccessible; sometimes among firwoods laden with hoarfrost the whole year through. Sometimes it was necessary to have recourse to fire as the means of opening a road through the wood, and getting rid of the old trunks which would have rendered all cultivation impossible. But most

[225] La Borderie, op. cit.

generally it was spade in hand that they went before to clear a space of soil sufficient to be sown or to become a meadow. They began in the immediate neighborhood of the primitive cell,[226] generally placed near a water-course, which helped in the formation of meadows. By degrees the clearing extended further, and even into the thickest shades. Great oaks fell to be replaced by harvest. These monks, most of whom had studied literature, were doubtless reminded then of the fine verses of Lucan —

> "Tunc omnia late
> Procumbunt nemora et spoliantur robore silvæ . . .
> Sed fortes tremuere manus, motique verenda
> Majestate loci . . .
> Procumbunt orni, nodosa impellitur ilex . . .
> Tunc primum posuere comas, et fronde carentes
> Admisere diem, propulsaque robore denso
> Sustinuit se silva cadens." [227]

Clearance made by St. Brieuc and his disciples.

The humble prose of our monastic annals reproduces this picture a hundred times in Latin less pure and less magnificent, but which has, nevertheless, the powerful charm of reality and simplicity. When St. Brieuc and his eighty monks from Great Britain landed in Armorica, and marked the site on which the town which afterwards bore his name was erected, they proceeded, like the soldiers of Cæsar, into the forests sacred to the Druids. They surveyed the ancient woods at first with curiosity, says the chronicle; they searched on all sides through these immemorial shades. They reached at last a valley branching out to either hand, the sides of which were everywhere clothed with fresh foliage, and divided by a transparent stream. Immediately they all set to work: they overthrew the great trees, they rooted out the copse, they cut down the brushwood and undergrowth; in a short time they had converted the impenetrable thicket into an open plain. This done, they had recourse to the spade and hoe; they dug and weeded the soil, and wrought it with minute care, thus putting it into a condition to produce abundant harvests.[228]

[226] "In medio vastæ eremi atque condensæ. . . . Cum monachis suis silvam succidere . . . certabat ut planitiem parare aliquam posset aptam jaciendis seminibus." — *Vita S. Launom.*, c. 8, 10.

[227] *Pharsalia*, iii. 394–445.

[228] "Illustrantibus illis arboreta maxima curiosius, annosaque fruteta circumquaque perscrutantibus in vallem binam deveniunt. . . . Vallem nemorum amœnitate confertam perambulans, fontem lucidissimum, aquis prospicuum. . . . Accinguntur omnes operi, diruunt arbores, succidunt fruteta, avellunt vepres spinarumque congeriem, silvamque densissimam in brevi reducunt in planitiem. . . . Vellebant plerumque glebas ligonibus: exole-

Fruit-trees.

Frequently they replaced the forest trees with fruit-trees; like that Telio, a British monk, who planted with his own hands, aided by St. Samson, an immense orchard, or, as the legend says, a true forest of fruit-trees, three miles in extent, in the neighborhood of Dol.[229] To him is attributed the introduction of the apple-tree into Armorica, where cider continues the national beverage. Others planted

Vines.

vines in a favorable exposure, and succeeded in acclimatizing it in those northern districts of Gaul afterwards known as Brittany, Normandy, and Picardy, where the inhabitants have not succeeded in preserving it.[230] They also gave particular attention to the care of bees, as has been already testified by the agreement between the Abbot of Dol and the Bishop of Paris.[231] No trade seemed too hard for them, those of the carpenter and mason being as

Various labors.

readily adopted as those of the wood-cutter and gardener. One ground, in the mill which he had himself made, the wheat which he was to eat;[232] another hollowed out a reservoir of stone round the fountain which he had discovered, or which had sprung up in answer to his prayers, that others might enjoy it after him;[233] and grateful posterity has taken care not to forget either the benefit or the benefactor.

All these men had the text of the Apostle always on their lips, "If any will not work, neither let him eat;" and that of the Psalmist, "Thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands." These texts are perpetually appealed to in their legends, and justly, for they are an epitome of their doctrine and life.

Influence of their example upon the rural populations.

The influence of such labors and examples rapidly made itself felt upon the rustic populations who lived in the neighborhood of this new cultivation, or who followed the solitaries into the forest to see their works and to find in them guides and protec-

batur deinceps humus sarculis, sulcisque minutissime exaratis." — *Vie de S. Brieuc*, by the canon of La Devison, 1627, quoted by La Borderie.

[229] "Magnum nemus." This orchard still existed in the twelfth century, under the name of *Arboretum Teliavi Sansonis*. — La Borderie, op. cit., p. 39.

[230] "Parva vitis hic inventa atque exculta." — *Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 16. "Quo tempore a climate meridiano distantem a præfato cœnobio passus fere quingentos. . . . B. Wandresigilus vineam plantare et excolere cœpit." — *Vita S. Ansperti*, c. 11.

[231] See above, p. 474. Compare *Vita S. Pauli*, ap. Bolland., t. ii. *Mart.*, p. 121; *Vita S. Amati*, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii.

[232] *Vita S. Gildasii*, ap. La Borderie, loc. cit.

[233] "Quem fontem . . . manu sua, ut aquæ retentor esset, terrestri circumdedit ædificio, et hactenus ob amorem illius a devotis non ignobili tegitur operculo." — *Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 9.

tors. From admiration the peasants gladly passed to imitation. Often they became the voluntary coadjutors of the monks, and, without embracing monastic life, aided them to clear the ground and build their dwellings.[234] Sometimes the brigands themselves, who at first had sought their lives, or attempted to interdict them from entering the forest, ended by becoming agriculturists after their example.[235] The rapid increase of rural population in the neighborhood of monastic establishments is thus explained, and also the immense amount of labor which the cenobites could undertake, the results of which exist and astonish us still.

The richest districts of France trace their prosperity to this origin: witness, amongst a thousand other places, that portion of La Brie between Meaux and Jouarre, once covered by a vast forest, the first inhabitant of which was the Irish monk Fiacre, whose name still continues popular, and whom our gardeners honor as their patron saint, probably without knowing anything whatever of his history. He had obtained from the Bishop of Meaux, who was the holder of this forest, permission to cut the wood which covered so much soil as he could surround with a ditch by one day's labor, in order to make a garden of it, and cultivate roots for poor travellers. Long after, the peasants of the environs showed this ditch, six times longer than was expected, and told how the Irish saint had taken his stick and traced a line upon the soil which sank into a ditch under the point, while the great forest trees fell right and left, as if to save him the trouble of cutting them down.[236] Thus was interpreted the profound impression produced by the labors of these monastic pioneers upon the minds of the people.

St. Fiacre and his garden.

The same occurrence is attributed to St. Goëznou, a British emigrant, and Bishop of Leon, who, having received from a count of the country the gift "of as much land to build a monastery as he could enclose with ditches in one day, took a fork, and, trailing it along the earth, walked for nearly two hours of Brittany, forming a square; and as he trailed this fork, the earth divided one

The ditch of St. Goëznou.

[234] "Circa illius eremi . . . quidam hominum rusticali opere tenuem sustentantes vitam habitabant. . . . Dei famulum sæpius invisere curabant . . . quo et ædificandi monasterii adjutores forent." — *Vita S. Karileſi*, c. 26.

[235] "Multi ejusdem silvæ latrones . . . aut fiebant monachi . . . aut deserentes latrocinia efficiebantur cultores agri." — *Vita S. Ebrulfi*, c. 11.

[236] "Tractu baculi terra dehiscens patebat, et nemus hinc et inde funditus corruebat. . . . Fossata vero usque in hodiernum diem ab incolis demonstrantur." — MABILL. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 573.

part from the other, and formed a great ditch, separating the lands given from those of the giver, which enclosure has always been held in such reverence that of old it served as an asylum and place of refuge to malefactors." [237]

In addition to these legends, born of the popular imagination and the grateful memory of ancient generations, it is pleasant to appeal to more certain witnesses by following upon our modern maps the traces of monastic labor through the forests of ancient France, and by observing a multitude of localities, the mere names of which indicate wooded districts evidently transformed into fields and plains by the monks.[238]

St. Calais and his treasure.

Is it the authentic narrative of a real incident that we should see in that chapter of the life of the Abbot Karilef, where it is said that this saint, moving with his spade the ground he dug round his cell in the forest of Perche, discovered a treasure there, over which he rejoiced ardently with his brethren, because it gave him the means at once of helping exiles and pilgrims, and of rewarding the poor peasants who had helped to build his oratory? Or is it not rather the symbolical form in which the admiration of the people at the sight of so many works, undertaken on such feeble resources, followed by results so excellent, and elevated by a charity so generous, has found expression? It is added that the abbot and his disciples labored with the spade because they had no means of working with the plough.[239]

But the plough was not long wanting to them anywhere. It was natural that it should be the principal instrument of monastic culture; and it may be said, without exaggeration, that it formed, along with the cross of the Redeemer, the ensign and emblazonry of the entire history of the monks during these early ages. *Cruce et aratro!* In it is summed up the life of one of the great monks of the sixth century, of whom we have yet to speak. Theodulph, born in Aquitaine, had issued from a long

The Abbot Theodulph and his plough.

590.

[237] Albert le Grand, p. 660, after the ancient Breviary of Leon.

[238] See some valuable indications given, from the map of Cassini and a multitude of ancient and contemporary authors, by M. Alfred Maury, in chap. v. of his able and curious book, *Les Forêts de la France.*

[239] "Cum quadam die coactis fratribus . . . agriculturæ in prædio jam dicto insisteret, ac rostro terram verteret (deerat namque illis arandi copia) . . . terræ glebam saculo detrahens, thesaurum latentem detexit. En, optimi commilitones, qualiter nostri misericordis Creatoris donis suis nostram exiguitatem nobilitat." — *Vita S. Karilefi*, c. 22. This is the last time we shall quote this narrative so complete and curious.

line of ancestors illustrious for nobility as well as for piety. Having become a monk at St. Thierry, near Reims, he was specially desirous to be employed in the agricultural labors of the monastery; two oxen were intrusted to him, whom he led in the plough for twenty-two years. With this yoke he did as much work as other teams accomplished with two, three, or even four of the brethren. There might be some who doubted the good sense of a man so foolish as to employ his life in such labors, and to brave all the intemperance of the seasons like a simple peasant, instead of living like his ancestors on the fruit of his subjects' labor. But all admired such a laborer, still more unwearied than his oxen; for while they rested he replaced the plough by the mattock, the harrow, or the spade; and when he returned to the monastery after days so well occupied, he was always first in the services and psalmody of the night. After these twenty-two years of ploughing he was elected abbot of his community. Then the inhabitants of the nearest village took his plough, and hung it up in their church as a relic. It was so, in fact; a noble and holy relic of one of those lives of perpetual labor and superhuman virtue, whose example has happily exercised a more fruitful and lasting influence than that of the proudest conquerors. It seems to me that we should all contemplate with emotion, if it still existed, that monk's plough, doubly sacred, by religion and by labor, by history and by virtue. For myself, I feel that I should kiss it as willingly as the sword of Charlemagne or the pen of Bossuet.

These same peasants of the neighborhood of Reims also admired in their simplicity a great old tree: it was said to have grown from the goad which the Abbot Theodulph used to prick on his oxen, and which he had one day stuck into the ground, when, leading them from the monastery, he paused on the roadside to mend his damaged plough.[240]

When he became abbot, Theodulph redoubled his activity

[240] "Effulsit prosapia sua . . . aulicorum optimatum generositate . . . honestati majorum suorum jam uniebatur . . . religionis velut ex lineari successione. . . . Juvencos binos, cum quibus ipsi agriculturæ insudavit bis undecim annos . . . pro variis passionibus aeris et commotionibus temporum. . . . Infatigabilis cum infatigabilibus. . . . Ut cum paulum aratro indulgeret, rostro manuum insisteret. . . . Mundus ista hominis non sani capitis esse judicabat, cum his potius agricolis dominari ille ex progenitorum usu debuisset. . . . Inter cœnobium et villam Melfigiam . . . stimulo spineo terræ infixo . . . agricola sanctus aratri correctione opportune incubuit." — BOLLAND., t. i. *Maii*, p. 97.

in his devotion to all the duties of his charge, and to those which he imposed upon himself in addition, in building a new church in honor of St. Hilary. He was specially assiduous in the services of the monastery, and exacted the same diligence from all the monks. The latter were not all animated by a zeal so impatient of repose. As both abbot and monks cherished the recollections of classic antiquity, one of the Religious once brought forward to him this verse of Horace: —

"Quod caret alterna requie durabile non est;"

to whom Theodulph answered that it was very well for pagans, too careful of their own comfort, but that as for him, he preferred that other, and equally classic text: —

"Nil sine magno
Vita labore dedit mortalibus." [241]

Labor and prayer formed the double sphere in which the existence of the monastic colonizers always flowed, and the double end of their long and unwearied efforts. But they certainly did not think it sufficient to initiate the rustic population of Frankish Gaul in the laborious habits and best processes of agriculture. They had still more at heart the cultivation of so many souls infinitely precious in the eyes of God and of the servants of God. By their example and exhortations, by their vigilant charity, and at the same time by their oral instruction, they dug in those rude hearts the deep furrows where they sowed abundantly the seeds of virtue and eternal life. To their example, and above all to their influence, the beneficent solicitude of the provincial Councils of Gaul for the spiritual instruction of the rural population must be attributed. "The priests," says the Council of Rouen, "must warn their parishioners that they ought to permit or cause their neatherds, swineherds, and other herdsmen, their ploughmen, and those who are continually in the fields or woods, and live there like the animals, to attend mass, on Sundays and holidays at least. Those who neglect this shall have to answer for their souls, and shall have to render a severe account. For the Lord when he came upon the earth did not choose orators or

Solicitude of the monks for the spiritual necessities of the peasants.

Council of Rouen.

650.

[241] "Erat namque quietis impatiens . . . duplicabat cursum laboris sui et officii. . . . Illius notissimi auctoris dictum . . . sibi parcentium ethnicorum remissioni." — BOLLAND., t. i. *Maii*, p. 97.

nobles for his disciples, but fishers and men of the humblest class; and it was not to high intelligences, but to the poor shepherds, that the angel announced in the first place the nativity of our Lord." [242]

But how could they have supplied the spiritual necessities of all that population of shepherds and laborers, not numerous, and spread over immense regions not more than half inhabited, if the monks had not come to second and succeed the secular clergy, establishing among them at a thousand different points, and precisely in the quarters least accessible, their cells and oratories? These oratories in time became churches; the cottages of the peasants gathered round them; the latter were henceforth sure of sharing in all the benefits of spiritual paternity, conferred upon them by men often issuing from the noblest and most powerful races among the masters and conquerors of the country, who voluntarily shared their fatigues and privations, who led a life as hard as, and even harder than, theirs, and who asked of them, in exchange for such services and examples, only that they should join them in praising the Lord.

Our solitaries, thus becoming, often against their will, the fathers and leaders of a numerous progeny, saw themselves surrounded by a double family, that of their disciples and that of their dependents, the monastic and the rustic community, both united by faith, labor, and common prayer. From the midst of forests so long unapproachable, and deserts henceforward repeopled, arose everywhere the hymn of joy, gratitude, and adoration. The prophecy of Isaiah was verified under their very eyes for them and by them: — "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." [243]

The forest canticle.

[242] "Admonere debent sacerdotes plebes subditas sibi ut *bubulcos* atque *porcarios*, vel alios *pastores*, vel *aratores*, qui *in agris assidue commorantur, vel in silvis*, et *ideo velut more pecudum vivunt*, in dominicis et in aliis festis diebus saltem vel ad missam faciant vel permittant venire: nam et hos Christus pretioso suo sanguine redemit. Quod si neglexerint, pro animabus eorum absque dubio rationem se reddituros sciant. Siquidem Dominus veniens in hunc mundum non elegit oratores atque nobiliores quosque, sed piscatores atque idiotas sibi discipulos ascivit. . . . Et salva altiore intelligentia, nativitas nostri Redemptoris primo omnium pastoribus ab angelo nunciatur." — COLETTI *Concilia*, t. vii. p. 406.

[243] ISAIAH, lv. 12, 13.

And are not we tempted sometimes to give ear and listen whether some faint echo of that delightful harmony does not float across the ocean of time? Certainly earth has never raised to heaven a sweeter concert than that of so many pure and pious voices full of faith and enthusiasm, rising from the glades of the ancient forests, from the sides of rocks, and from the banks of waterfalls or torrents, to celebrate their new-born happiness, like the birds under the leaves, or like our dear little children in their charming lispings, when they greet with joyful and innocent confidence the dawn of a day in which they foresee neither storms nor decline.

The Church has known days more resplendent and more solemn, days better calculated to raise the admiration of sages, the fervor of pious souls, and the unshaken confidence of her children; but I know not if she has ever breathed forth a charm more touching and pure than in the spring-time of monastic life.

In that Gaul which had borne for five centuries the ignominious yoke of the Cæsars, which had groaned under Barbarian invasions, and where everything still breathed blood, fire, and carnage, Christian virtue, watered by the spirit of penitence and sacrifice, began to bud everywhere. Everywhere faith seemed to blossom like flowers after the winter; everywhere moral life revived and budded like the verdure of the woods; everywhere under the ancient arches of the Druidical forests was celebrated the fresh betrothal of the Church with the Frankish people.

BOOK VII.

ST. COLUMBANUS.—THE IRISH IN GAUL AND THE COLONIES OF LUXEUIL.

SUMMARY.

Ireland, converted by two slaves, becomes Christian without having been Roman. — Legend of St. Patrick: the bards and the slaves; St. Bridget; the light of Kildare. — The Irish monasteries: Bangor; St. Luan. — The Irish missionaries. — Birth and Education of St. Columbanus; his mission in Gaul; his sojourn at Annegray; the wolves and the Sueve brigands. — He settles at Luxeuil; state of Sequania: great influx of disciples; *Laus perennis*. — Episcopal opposition: haughty letter of Columbanus to a council. — His struggle with Brunehault and Thierry II.: St. Martin of Autun founded by Brunehault: first expulsion of Columbanus; the young Agilus; Columbanus at Besançon; return to Luxeuil. — He is again expelled: his voyage on the Loire; arrival at Nantes; letter to the monks at Luxeuil. — He goes to Clotaire II., King of Neustria, and to Theodebert II., King of Austrasia. — His mission to the Alamans; St. Gall; the dialogue of the demons on the lake. — He abandons the conversion of the Sclaves, and returns to Theodebert; defeat and death of this king. — Columbanus crosses the Alps and passes into Lombardy. — He founds Bobbio; his poems; his remonstrances with Pope Boniface IV. — Clotaire II. recalls him to Gaul: he refuses and dies. — He was neither the enemy of kings nor of popes. — Rule of Columbanus: the *Penitential*.

Disciples of Columbanus in Italy and Helvetia. — His successors at Bobbio: Attalus and Bertulph; the Arian Ariowald and the monk Blidulf. — Abbey of Dissentis in Rhetia: St. Sigisbert. — St. Gall separates from Columbanus; origin of the abbey called by his name; the demons again. — Princess Frideburga and her betrothed. — Gall is reconciled to Columbanus and dies.

Influence, preponderance, and prosperity of Luxeuil under St. Eustace, first successor of Columbanus. — Luxeuil becomes the monastic capital of Gaul and the first school of Christianity: bishops and saints issue from Luxeuil: Hermenfried of Verdun. — Schism of Agrestin subdued at the Council of Mâcon; the Irish tonsure; Note on Bishop Faron and his wife. — The Benedictine rule adopted in conjunction with the

institution of Luxeuil. — The double consulate. — St. Walbert, third abbot of Luxeuil. — Exemption accorded by Pope John IV.

Colonies of Luxeuil in the two Burgundies: St. Desle at Lure and Clotaire II. — The ducal family of St. Donatus: Romainmoutier re-established; the nuns of Jussamoutier; Beze; Bregille. — The abbot Hermenfried at Cusance: he kisses the hands of the husbandmen.

Colonies of Luxeuil in Rauracia: St. Ursanne; St. Germain of Grandval, first martyr of the Columbanic institution.

Colonies of Luxeuil in Neustria: St. Wandregisil at Fontenelle: he converted the country of Caux: St. Phillibert at Jumiéges; commerce and navigation; death of four hundred and fifty saints of Jumiéges.

Colonies of Luxeuil in Brie and Champagne: St. Ouen and his brothers; Jouarre. — St. Agilus at Rebais; hospitality; vision of the poor traveller. — Burgundofara braves martyrdom to be made a nun, and when abbess, repels the schismatic Agrestin. — Her brother St. Faron and King Clotaire II. hunting. — St. Fiacre, St. Fursy, St. Frobert at Moutier-la-Celle, St. Berchaire at Hautvillers and Montier-en-Der. — St. Salaberga at Laon.

Colonies of Luxeuil in Ponthieu; the shepherd Valery, gardener at Luxeuil, founder of Leuconäus. — Popular opposition. — St. Riquier at Centule.

Colonies of Luxeuil among the Morins: St. Omer and St. Bertin at Sithiu; change of the name of monasteries.

The Saints of Remiremont: Amatus and Romaric; the double monasteries; Agrestin at Remiremont; Romaric and the prime minister Grimoald. — St. Eloysius and Solignac.

Why was the rule of St. Columbanus rejected and replaced by that of St. Benedict? The Council of Autun acknowledges only the latter. The Council of Rome in 610 confirmed it. It was identified with the authority of the Holy See, and thus succeeded in governing all.

Ad has nostras Gallicanas partes S. Columbanus ascendens, Luxoviense construxit monasterium, factus ibi in gentem magnam. — S. Bernardi, *Vita S. Malach.*, c. 5.

Si tollis libertatem, tollis et dignitatem. — S. Columbani, *Epist. ad Fratres.*

While the missionaries of Monte Cassino planted slowly and obscurely in the new kingdom of the Franks that Order, the observance of which St. Gregory the Great, by his example and by his disciples, regulated and extended everywhere, a man had appeared in the Church and in Gaul as the type of a distinct race and spirit. A monk and monastic legislator, like St. Benedict, he at one moment threatened to eclipse and replace the Benedictine institution in the Catholic world. This was St. Columbanus.

590-603.

He came from the north, as St. Maur had come from the south. He was born in Ireland: he brought with him a

colony of Irish monks; and his name leads us back to consider that race and country of which he has been the most illustrious representative among us.

Ireland, that virgin island on which proconsul never set foot, which never knew either the orgies or the exactions of Rome, was also the only place in the world of which the Gospel took possession without bloodshed. It is thus spoken of by Ozanam;[1] and certainly no one has described it better, though allowance must be made for the excessive admiration which disposes him to exalt above measure the part played by the Irish from the sixth to the twelfth centuries, attributing to them exclusively that impulse of diffusion and expansion, and that thirst for instructing and converting, which characterized the entire Church and monastic order during that long and glorious period. The preponderance of the Irish race in the work of preaching and in the conversion of pagan or semi-Christian nations was only temporary, and did not last longer than the seventh century; but their exertions at that time were so undeniable as to leave France, Switzerland, and Belgium under a debt of everlasting gratitude. This branch of the great family of Celtic nations, known under the name of *Hibernians*, *Scots*, or *Gaels*, and whose descendants and language have survived to our own days in Ireland, in the Highlands of Scotland, in Wales, and in Lower Brittany, had adopted the faith of Christ with enthusiasm; and, at the moment when Celtic vitality seemed about to perish in Gaul and Great Britain, under the double pressure of Roman decay and Germanic invasion, appeared among all the Christian races as the one most devoted to the Catholic faith, and most zealous for the spread of the Gospel.[2] From the moment that this *Green Erin*, situated at the extremity of the known world, had seen the sun of faith rise upon her, she had vowed herself to it with an ardent and tender devotion which became her very life. The course of ages has not interrupted this; the most bloody and implacable of persecutions has not shaken it; the defection of all northern Europe has not led her astray; and she maintains still, amid the splendors and miseries of modern civilization and Anglo-Saxon supremacy, an inextinguishable centre of faith, where

Ireland became Christian without having been Roman.

[1] *Etudes Germaniques*, t. ii. p. 99.

[2] "Scottorum gens . . . absque reliquarum gentium legibus, tamen in Christiani vigoris dogmate florens, omnium vicinarum gentium fide præpollet." — Jonas, *Vita S. Columb.*, c. 6, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B. *sæc. II.*

survives, along with the completest orthodoxy, that admirable purity of manners which no conqueror and no adversary has ever been able to dispute, to equal, or to diminish.

The ecclesiastical antiquity and hagiography of Ireland constitute in themselves an entire world of inquiry. We shall be pardoned for not desiring to enter into their interminable and somewhat confused perspectives.[3] It will suffice us to detach from this mass of legendary narratives, which modern erudition has not yet been able to clear away, as much as is indispensable to our subject, and will prove the development of the monastic principle, contemporaneous with, but entirely independent of the diffusion of cenobitical institutions in all the Roman empire and through all the Barbarian races.

Two slaves brought the faith to Ireland, and at the same time founded monastic life there. Such is at least the popular belief, confirmed by the most credible narratives.

Conversion of Ireland by St. Patrick. — 387-465.

The Gallo-Roman Patrick, son of a relative of the great St. Martin of Tours, had been seized at sixteen by pirates, and sold as a slave into Ireland, where he kept the flocks of his master, and where hunger, cold, nakedness, and the pitiless severity of this master, initiated him into all the horrors of slavery. Restored to liberty after six years of servitude, and returned to Gaul, he saw always in his dreams the children of the poor Irish pagans whose yoke he had known, holding out to him their little arms. His sleep and his studies were equally disturbed by these visions. It seemed to him that he heard the voice of these innocents asking baptism of him, and crying — "Dear Christian child, return among us! return to save us!"[4] After having studied in the great monastic sanctuaries of Marmoutier and Lerins, after having accompanied St. Germain of Auxerre in the mission undertaken by that great champion of orthodoxy to root out the Pelagian heresy so dear to the Celtic races from Great Britain, he went to Rome, obtained there a mission from the Pope St. Celestin, and returned to Ireland as a bishop to preach the faith. The kings, the chiefs, the warlike and impressionable people of

[3] Lanigan, *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland from the First Introduction of Christianity to the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century* (Dublin, 1829, 4 vols.), may be consulted with advantage, though without coinciding in its views.

[4] "Vidi in visu de nocte . . . Putabam . . . audire vocem ipsorum . . . Rogamus te, sancte puer, venias et adhuc ambules inter nos. Et valde compunctus sum corde, et amplius non potui legere, et sic expergefactus sum." — Act. SS. Bolland., t. ii. *Mart.*, p. 535.

Green Erin listened to him, followed him, and testified towards him that impassioned veneration which has become the most popular tradition of the Irish, and which thirteen centuries have not lessened. After thirty-three years of apostleship he died, leaving Ireland almost entirely converted, and, moreover, filled with schools and communities destined to become a nursery of missionaries for the West.

Legend and history have vied in taking possession of the life of St. Patrick.

Patrick and Ossian.

There is nothing in his legend more poetic than the meeting between the Gallo-Roman apostle and the Irish bards, who formed a hereditary and sacerdotal class. Among them he found his most faithful disciples. Ossian himself, the blind Homer of Ireland, allowed himself to be converted by him, and Patrick listened in his turn as he sang the long epic of Celtic kings and heroes.[5] Harmony was not established between these two without being preceded by some storms. Patrick threatened with hell the profane warriors whose glory Ossian vaunted, and the bard replied to the apostle, "If thy God was in hell, my heroes would draw him from it." But triumphant truth made peace between poetry and faith. The monasteries founded by Patrick became the asylum and centre of Celtic poetry. When once blessed and transformed, says an old author, the songs of the bards became so sweet that the angels of God leant down from heaven to listen to them;[6] and this explains the reason why the harp of the bards has continued the symbol and emblazonry of Catholic Ireland.

Nothing is better established in the history of St. Patrick, than his zeal to preserve the country where he had himself borne the yoke, from the abuses of slavery, and especially from the incursions of the pirates, Britons and Scots, robbers and traffickers in men, who made it a sort of store from which they took their human cattle. The most authentic memorial of the saint which remains to us is his eloquent protest against the king of a British horde, who, landing in the midst of a tribe baptized the evening before, massacred several, and carried off the others to sell them. "Patrick, an ignorant sinner, but constituted bishop in Hibernia, and dwelling among the barbarous nations, because of my love for God, I write these letters with my own hand to be transmitted to the soldiers of the tyrant, I say not to my fellow-citizens, nor

[5] Ozanam, ii. 472.
[6] La Villemarqué, *Légende Celtique*, p. 109.

to the fellow-citizens of the saints of Rome, but to the compatriots of the devil, to the apostate Scots and Picts who live in death, and fatten themselves with the blood of the innocent Christians with whom I have travailed for my God. . . . Does not the divine mercy which I love oblige me to act thus, to defend even those who of old made myself captive and massacred the slaves and servants of my father?"[7] Elsewhere he praises the courage of the enslaved girls whom he had converted, and who defended their modesty and faith heroically, against their unworthy masters.[8]

Men and women were treated then among all the Celtic nations as they were during the last century on the coasts of Africa. Slavery, and the trade in slaves, was still more difficult to root out among them than paganism.[9] And yet the Christian faith dawned upon Ireland by means of two slaves! The name of Patrick is associated by an undying link with that of Bridget, the daughter, according to the legend, of a bard and a beautiful captive, whom her master had sent away, like Hagar, at the suggestion of his wife. Born in grief and shame, she was received and baptized, along with her mother, by the disciples of St. Patrick. In vain would her father have taken her back and bestowed her in marriage when her beauty and wisdom became apparent. She devoted herself to God and the poor, and went to live in an oak-wood formerly consecrated to the false gods. The miraculous cures she wrought attracted the crowd, and she soon founded the first female monastery which Ireland had known, under the name of Kildare, *the Cell of the Oak*. She died there at seventy, after an entire life of love and labor. Upon her tomb immediately rose the inextinguishable flame called *the Light of St. Bridget*,[10] which her

St. Bridget. 467-525.

[7] "Inter barbaras gentes proselytus et perfuga, ob amorem Dei. . . . Non dico civibus meis atque civibus sanctorum Romanorum, sed civibus dæmonorum. . . . Socii Scotorum atque Pictorum apostatarum. . . . Illam gentem quæ me aliquando cœpit, et devastavit servos et ancillas patris mei." — *Epistola S. P. ad Christianos Corolici Tyranni subditos*, ap. Bolland., d. 17 *Mart.*, p. 538.

[8] "Sed et illæ maxime laborant, quæ servitio detinentur, usque ad terrores et minas assidue perferunt." — *Confessio* S. Patricii *de Vita et Conversatione sua*, ap. Boll., p. 536.

[9] The slave trade was in full activity in the tenth century between England and Ireland, and the port of Bristol was its principal centre.

[10] "Apud Kildariam occurret *ignis sanctæ Brigidæ*, quem inextinguibilem vocant; non quod extingui non posset, sed quod tam sollicite moniales et sanctæ mulieres, ignem, suppetente materia, fovent et nutriunt, ut tempore virginis per tot annorum curricula semper mansit inextinctus." — Girald. Camb., *De Mirabil. Hibern.*, Disq. 2, c. 34.

nuns kept always burning, which the faith and love of an unfortunate people watched over for a thousand years as the signal-light of the country, until the triumph of a sacrilegious reform, and which in our own days has been relighted by the muse of a patriot poet.[11] Innumerable convents of women trace their origin to the Abbess of Kildare: wherever the Irish monks have penetrated, from Cologne to Seville, churches have been raised in her honor; and wherever, in our own time, British emigration spreads, the name of Bridget points out the woman of Irish race.[12] Deprived by persecution and poverty of the means of erecting monuments of stone, they testify their unshaken devotion to that dear memory by giving her name to their daughters — a noble and touching homage made by a race, always unfortunate and always faithful, to a saint who was like itself, a slave, and like itself, a Catholic. There are glories more noisy and splendid, but are there many which do more honor to human nature?[13]

The productiveness of the monastic germ planted by Patrick and Bridget was prodigious. In his own lifetime, the apostle of Ireland was astonished to find that he could no longer number the sons and daughters of chieftains who had embraced cloistral life at his bidding.[14] The rude and simple architecture of these primitive monasteries has left a visible trace in the celebrated *round towers*, spread over the soil of Ireland, which had so long exercised the ingenuity of archæologists, until contemporary science

The Irish monasteries.

[11] "Like the bright lamp that shone in Kildare's holy fane,
And burned through long ages of darkness and storm,
Is the heart that afflictions have come o'er in vain,
Whose spirit outlives them, unfading and warm!
Erin! oh Erin! thus bright through the tears
Of a long night of bondage thy spirit appears."

MOORE, *Irish Melodies.*

[12] *Bridget* or *Bride.* There are still eighteen parishes in Ireland which bear the name of *Kilbride*, or the Church of Bridget.

[13] At the time of the invasion of the Danes, who burned Kildare in 835, the shrine of St. Bridget was removed to the monastery of Downpatrick, where the body of St. Patrick reposed. In 850 the relics of St. Columb-kill were for a like reason brought from the island of Iona to the same shelter. Thus the three great saints of the Celtic race are to be found assembled in the same tomb. Their solemn translation was celebrated, in 1186, by a legate of Pope Urban III.

[14] "Filii Scotorum et filiæ regulorum monachi et virgines Christi esse videntur . . . nescimus numerum eorum." — *Confessio*, loc. cit. Mabillon thinks that St. Patrick gave the rule of Marmoutier to his newly-born communities. — *Præf. in I. sæc. Bened.*, cap. i. n. 25. Compare HÆFTEN, *Disquisitiones Monasticæ*, p. 57, Antwerpia, 1644, folio. Lanigan believes that there were monks in Ireland even before St. Patrick.

demonstrated that these monuments were nothing else than the belfries of cathedrals and abbeys erected between the time of the conversion of the island and its conquest by the English.[15] Among so many saints who were the successors and emulators of St. Patrick, we shall name only one, Luan, whose memory St. Bernard consecrated six centuries afterwards, by affirming that he had himself founded in his own person a hundred monasteries.[16] This Luan was a little shepherd who had been educated by the monks of the immense abbey of Bangor. For shortly the monasteries at Bangor, Clonfert, and elsewhere, became entire towns, each of which enclosed more than three thousand cenobites. The Thebaid reappeared in Ireland, and the West had no longer anything to envy in the history of the East.

Intellectual culture in the monasteries.

There was besides an intellectual development, which the Eremites of Egypt had not known. The Irish communities, joined by the monks from Gaul and Rome, whom the example of Patrick had drawn upon his steps,[17] entered into rivalry with the great monastic schools of Gaul. They explained Ovid there; they copied Virgil; they devoted themselves especially to Greek literature; they drew back from no inquiry, from no discussion; they gloried in placing boldness on a level with faith. The young Luan answered the Abbot of Bangor, who warned him against the dangers of too engrossing a study of the liberal arts: "If I have the knowledge of God, I shall never offend God; for they who disobey him are they who know him not." Upon which the abbot left him, saying, "My son, thou art firm in the faith, and true knowledge will put thee in the right road for heaven." [18]

The Irish missionaries.

A characteristic still more distinctive of the Irish monks, as of all their nation, was the imperious necessity of spreading themselves without, of seeking or carrying knowledge and faith afar, and of penetrating into the most distant regions to watch or combat paganism.

[15] Essay of Mr. Petrie, presented to the Royal Academy of Ireland in 1836.

[16] S. Bernard., *in Vita S. Malachiæ*, c. 6.

[17] In 536, fifty monks from the Continent landed at Cork.

[18] See Ozanam, op. cit., ii. 97, 101, 472, and the curious verses which he quotes: —

"Benchior bona regula
Rocta atque divina . . .
Navis nunquam turbata . . .
Simplex simul atque docta
Undecumque invicta . . ."

This monastic nation, therefore, became the missionary nation *par excellence*. While some came to Ireland to procure religious instruction, the Irish missionaries launched forth from their island. They covered the land and seas of the West. Unwearied navigators, they landed on the most desert islands; they overflowed the Continent with their successive immigrations.[19] They saw in incessant visions a world known and unknown to be conquered for Christ. The poem of the *Pilgrimage of St. Brandan*, that monkish Odyssey so celebrated in the middle ages, that popular prelude of the *Divina Commedia*, shows us the Irish monks in close contact with all the dreams and wonders of the Celtic ideal. Hereafter we shall see them struggling against the reality; we shall speak of their metropolis upon the rock of Iona, in the Hebrides; we shall tell what they did for the conversion of Great Britain. But we must follow them first into Gaul, that country from which the Gospel had been carried to them by Patrick. Several had already reached Armorica with that invasion of Celtic refugees which we have described in the preceding Book. But it was only in the end of the sixth century that the action of Ireland upon the countries directly subjected to Frank dominion became decisive. She thus generously repaid her debt to Gaul. She had received Patrick from Gaul; in return, she sent Columbanus.

Birth of St. Columbanus.

The rival of St. Benedict was born the same year in which the patriarch of Monte Cassino died. Instructed from his infancy in literature and the liberal arts, he had also to struggle early with the temptations of the flesh. His beauty, which attracted all eyes, exposed him, says the monk who has written his life,[20] to the shameless temptations of the beautiful Irishwomen. It was in vain that he plunged into the study of grammar, rhetoric, geometry, and Holy Scripture. The goad of voluptuousness pricked him perpetually. He went to the cell inhabited by a pious recluse to consult her. "Twelve years ago," she answered him, "I myself left my own house to enter into a war against sin. Inflamed by the fires of youth, thou shalt attempt in vain to escape from thy frailty while thou remainest upon

[19] "In exteras etiam nationes, quasi inundatione facta illa se sanctorum examina effuderunt." — S. Bernardi, *Vita S. Malach.*, c. 5.

[20] *Vita S. Columbani Abbatis, Auctore* Jona, *Monacho Bobiensi Fere Æquali*, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. This Jonas was of Susa, in Piedmont. He wrote by order of Attala and Eustace, successors of Columbanus. He quotes Titus Livius and Virgil by the side of the Holy Scriptures. His book is one of the most curious monuments of the Merovingian period.

thy native soil. Hast thou forgotten Adam, Samson, David, and Solomon, all lost by the seductions of beauty and love? Young man, to save thyself, thou must flee."[21] He listened, believed her, and decided on going away. His mother attempted to deter him, prostrating herself before him upon the threshold of the door; he crossed that dear obstacle, left the province of Leinster, where he was born, and, after spending some time with a learned doctor, who made him compose a commentary on the Psalms, he found refuge at Bangor, among the many monks still imbued with the primitive fervor which had assembled them there under the cross of the holy abbot Comgall.

But this first apprenticeship of the holy war was not enough. The adventurous temper of his race, the passion for pilgrimage and preaching,[22] drew him beyond the seas. He heard incessantly the voice which had spoken to Abraham echoing in his ears, "Go out of thine own country, and from thy father's house, into the land which I shall show thee." That land was ours. The abbot attempted in vain to retain him. Columbanus, then thirty, left Bangor with twelve other monks, crossed Great Britain, and reached Gaul. He found the Catholic faith in existence there, but Christian virtue and ecclesiastical discipline unknown or outraged — thanks to the fury of the wars and the negligence of the bishops. He devoted himself during several years to traversing the country, preaching the Gospel, and especially to giving an example of the humility and charity which he taught to all. Arriving in the course of his apostolical wanderings in Burgundy, he was received there by King Gontran, of all the grandsons of Clovis the one whose life appears to have been least blamable, and who had most sympathy for the monks. His eloquence delighted the king and his lords. Fearing that he would leave them, Gontran offered him whatever he chose if he would remain; and as the Irishman answered that he had not left his own country to seek wealth, but to follow Christ and bear his cross, the king persisted, and told him that there were in his kingdoms many savage and solitary places where

His mission to the Gauls.

[21] "Liberalium litterarum doctrinis et grammaticorum studiis. . . . Cum eum formæ elegantia . . . omnibus gratum redderet. . . . Lascivarum puellarum in eum suscitavit amores, præcipue quas forma corporis. . . . Perge, o juvenis! perge, evita ruinam." — Jonas, c. 7, 8.

[22] "Scottorum quibus consuetudo peregrinandi jam pene in naturam conversa est." — Walaridus Strabo, *De Mirac. S. Galli*, lib. ii. c. 47. "Qui tironem suum ad futura bella erudierat." — Jonas, c. 9.

he might find the cross and win heaven, but that he must on no account leave Gaul, nor dream of converting other nations, till he had assured the salvation of the Franks and Burgundians.[23]

His residence at Annegray.

Columbanus yielded to his desire, and chose for his dwelling-place the ancient Roman castle of Annegray.[24] He led the simplest life there with his companions. He lived for entire weeks without any other food than the grass of the fields, the bark of the trees, and the bilberries which are to be found in our fir-woods; he received other provisions only from the charity of the neighbors. Often he separated himself from his disciples to plunge alone into the woods, and live in common with the animals. There, as afterwards, in his long and close communion with the bare and savage nature of these desert places, nothing alarmed him, nor did he cause fear to any creature. Everything obeyed his voice. The birds, as has been already mentioned, came to receive his caresses, and the squirrels descended from the tree-tops to hide themselves in the folds of his cowl. He expelled a bear from the cavern which became his cell; he took from another bear a dead stag, whose skin served to make shoes for his brethren.

The wolves and brigands.

One day, while he wandered in the depths of the wood, bearing a volume of Holy Scripture on his shoulder, and meditating whether the ferocity of the beasts, who could not sin, was not better than the rage of men, which destroyed their souls, he saw a dozen wolves approach and surround him on both sides. He remained motionless, repeating these words, "Deus in adjutorium." The wolves, after having touched his garments with their mouths, seeing him without fear, passed upon their way. He pursued his, and a few steps farther on heard a noise of human voices, which he recognized as those of a band of German brigands, of the Sueve nation, who then wasted that country. He did not see them; but he thanked God for having preserved him from this double danger, in which may be seen a double symbol of the constant struggle which the monks had to maintain in

[23] "Ob negligentiam præsulum, religionis virtus pene abolita. . . . Gratus regi et aulicis ob egregiam doctrinæ copiam. . . . Ut intra terminos Galliarum resideret. . . . Tantum ne solo nostræ ditionis relicto, ad vicinas transeas nationes . . . ut nostræ saluti provideas." —JONAS, c. 11, 12. Compare WALAF. STRABON., lib. i. c. 2. I refer to the *Vie des Saints de Franche-Comté*, t. ii., and to vol. vii. of October by the new Bollandists, p. 868, for the divers dates assigned to the journey and sojourn of Columbanus in France.

[24] Now a hamlet of the commune of Faucogney (Haute-Saône).

their laborious warfare against the wild forces of nature, and the still more savage barbarity of men.[25]

At the end of some years, the increasing number of his disciples obliged him to seek another residence, and by the help of one of the principal ministers of the Frank king, Agnoald, whose wife was a Burgundian of very high family,[26] he obtained from Gontran the site of another strong castle, named Luxeuil, where there had been Roman baths, magnificently ornamented, and where the idols formerly worshipped by the Gauls were still found in the neighboring forests. Upon the ruins of these two civilizations the great monastic metropolis of Austrasia and Burgundy was to be planted.

He settles at Luxeuil. 590.

Luxeuil was situated upon the confines of these two kingdoms, at the foot of the Vosges, and north of that Sequania, the southern part of which had already been for more than a century lighted up by the abbey of Condat. The district which extends over the sides of the Vosges and Jura, since so illustrious and prosperous under the name of Franche-Comté then consisted, for a range of sixty leagues, and a breadth of ten or fifteen, of nothing but parallel chains of inaccessible defiles, divided by impenetrable forests, and bristling with immense pine-woods, which descended from the heights of the highest mountains, to overshadow the course of the rapid and pure streams of the Doubs, Dessoubre, and Loue. The Barbarian invasions, and especially that of Attila, had reduced the Roman towns into ashes, and annihilated all agriculture and population. The forest and the wild beasts had taken possession of that solitude which it was reserved for the disciples of Columbanus and Benedict to transform into fields and pastures.[27]

Condition of Sequania.

[25] "Novem dies jam transierant, quo vir Dei cum suis non alias dapes caperet quam arborum cortices herbasque saltus . . . vel parvulorum pomorum quæ Bollucas vulgo appellant. . . . Chamnoaldo Lugduno clavato pontifice, qui ejus et minister et discipulus fuit, cognovimus referente, qui se testabatur sæpe vidisse . . . bestias ac aves accersere . . . ferusculam, quam vulgo homines Squirium vocant. . . . Abiit fera mitis nec prorsus est ausa redire. . . . Contra naturam absque murmure . . . cadaver reliquit. . . . Conspicit duodecim lupos advenire . . . ora vestimenti ejus jungunt . . . interritum relinquunt. . . . Vocem Suevorum multorum per avia aberrantium." — Jonas, c. 14–16, 26, 30.

[26] "Regis conviva et consiliarius. . . . Conjux ex præclara Burgundiorum prosapia. Quanquam ejus industria universa palatii officia gererentur, nec non totius regni querimoniæ illius æquissima definitione terminarentur." — *Vita S. Agili*, c. 1, 3, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii.

[27] "Erat tunc vasta eremus Vosagus nomine . . . aspera vastitate solitudinis et scopulorum interpositione loca aspera." — Jonas, c. 12. See the

Disciples collected abundantly round the Irish colonizer. He could soon count several hundreds of them in the three monasteries which he had built in succession, and which he himself governed.[28] The noble Franks and Burgundians, overawed by the sight of these great creations of work and prayer, brought their sons to him, lavished gifts upon him, and often came to ask him to cut their long hair, the sign of nobility and freedom, and admit them into the ranks of his army.[29] Labor and prayer attained here, under the strong arm of Columbanus, to proportions up to that time unheard of. The multitude of poor serfs and rich lords became so great that he could organize that perpetual service called *Laus perennis*, which already existed at Agaune, on the other side of the Jura and Lake Leman, where, night and day, the voices of the monks, "unwearied as those of angels," arose to celebrate the praises of God in an unending song.[30]

Increase of disciples round St. Columbanus.

Laus perennis.

Rich and poor were equally bound to the agricultural labors, which Columbanus himself directed. In the narrative of the wonders which mingle with every page of his life, they are all to be seen employed successively in ploughing, in mowing, in reaping, and in cutting wood. With the impetuosity natural to him, he made no allowance for any weakness. He required even the sick to thrash the wheat. An article of his rule ordained the monk to go to rest so fatigued that he should fall asleep on the way, and to get up before he had slept sufficiently. It is at the cost of this

excellent description of Jura and its monastic agriculture, in the *Histoire des Grandes Forêts de la Gaule*, by M. Alfred Maury, p. 181.

[28] Annegray, Luxeuil, and Fontaines. The biographer of St. Valery gives the number two hundred and twenty; other authors say six hundred.

[29] "Ibi nobilium liberi undique concurrere nitebantur." — Jonas, c. 17. "Multi non solum de genere Burgundionum, sed etiam Francorum . . . confluxerunt . . . ut omnia sua ad ipsum locum contraderent, et coma capitis deposita." — Walafr. Strabo, c. 2.

[30] S. Bernard., *in Vita S. Malach.*, c. 6. Compare Mabill., *Annal.*, lib. viii. n. 10, 16; D. Pitra, *Hist. de S. Leger*, p. 301; the *Vie des Saints de Franche-Comté*, t. ii. p. 25 and 478. This perpetual service, called *Laus perennis*, was long maintained at St. Maurice, at Remiremont, at St. Denis, and elsewhere. There are also traces of its existence in the first monasteries of Egypt and Palestine. In the Life of St. Mary the Egyptian, in speaking of a monastery near Jordan, are the following words: "Psallentia ibi erat, incessabiles totius noctis habens stabilitates . . . et in ore psalmi divini absque diminutione." — Rosweyde, *Vitæ Patrum*, p. 383. Alexander, a Syrian monk, who died about 430, founded a special order of monks called *Acémètes*, or people who do not sleep. He ruled, first on the shores of the Euphrates, and afterwards at Constantinople, three hundred recluses, divided into six choirs, who relieved each other in singing night and day.

excessive and perpetual labor that the half of our own country and of ungrateful Europe had been restored to cultivation and life.[31]

Displeasure of the bishops.

Twenty years passed thus, during which the reputation of Columbanus increased and extended afar. But his influence was not undisputed. He displeased one portion of the Gallo-Frank clergy, in the first place, by the Irish peculiarities of his costume and tonsure, perhaps also by the intemperate zeal with which he attempted, in his epistles, to remind the bishops of their duties, and certainly by his obstinate perseverance in celebrating Easter according to Irish usage, on the fourteenth day of the moon, when that day happened on a Sunday, instead of celebrating it, with all the rest of the Church, on the Sunday after the fourteenth day. This peculiarity, at once trifling and oppressive, disturbed his whole life, and weakened his authority; for his pertinacity on this point reached so far, that he actually attempted more than once to bring the Holy See itself to his side.[32]

The details of his struggle with the bishops of Gaul remain unknown; but the resolution he displayed may be understood, by some passages of his letter to the synod or council which met to examine this question. The singular mixture of humility and pride, and the manly and original eloquence with which this epistle is stamped, does not conceal what was strange and irregular in the part which he arrogated to himself in the Church. Though he calls himself *Columbanus the sinner*, it is very apparent that he felt himself the guide and instructor of those to whom he spoke.

His letter to a council.

He begins by thanking God that, owing to His grace, so many holy bishops now assemble to consider the interests of faith and morality. He exhorts them to assemble more frequently, despite the dangers and difficulties which they might meet on the road, and wishes them to occupy themselves, under the presidence of Jesus Christ, not only with the question of Easter, but with other

[31] "Imperat ut omnes surgant atque messem in area virga cædant. . . . Cum vidisset eos magno labore glebas scindere." — JONAS, c. 20, 23, 28. "Lassus ad stratum veniat, ambulansque dormitet, necdum expleto somno surgere compellatur." — *Reg.* S. COLUMBANI, c. 9.

[32] He wrote several letters on this subject to St. Gregory the Great, of which there is no trace in the correspondence of this pope, and only one of them has been preserved in the works of Columbanus. In the latter, he says that Satan hindered his three former letters from coming to the hands of Gregory.

canonical observances cruelly neglected. He prides himself on his own trials, and what he calls the persecution of which he has been the victim. He blames the diversity of customs and variety of traditions in the Church, condemning himself thus by his own mouth, and not perceiving the wisdom of ecclesiastical authority, which seems to have long tolerated, in himself and his compatriots, the individual and local observance which he would fain have inflicted as a yoke upon all Christendom. He also advocates union between the secular and regular clergy; and his language then becomes more touching and solemn. "I am not the author of this difference; I have come into these parts, a poor stranger, for the cause of the Christ Saviour, our common God and Lord; I ask of your holinesses but a single grace: that you will permit me to live in silence in the depth of these forests, near the bones of seventeen brethren whom I have already seen die: I shall pray for you with those who remain to me, as I ought, and as I have always done for twelve years. Ah! let us live with you in this Gaul where we now are, since we are destined to live with each other in heaven, if we are found worthy to enter there. Despite our lukewarmness, we will follow, the best we can, the doctrines and precepts of our Lord and the apostles. These are our weapons, our shield, and our glory. To remain faithful to them we have left our country, and are come among you. It is yours, holy fathers, to determine what must be done with some poor veterans, some old pilgrims, and if it would not be better to console than to disturb them. I dare not go to you for fear of entering into some contention with you, but I confess to you the secrets of my conscience, and how I believe, above all, in the tradition of my country, which is, besides, that of St. Jerome."

All this is mingled with troublesome calculations about the celebration of Easter, and a great array of Scripture texts. It ends thus: "God forbid that we should delight our enemies — namely, the Jews, heretics, and pagans — by strife among Christians. . . . If God guides you to expel me from the desert which I have sought here beyond the seas, I should only say with Jonah, 'Take me up and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm.' But before you throw me overboard, it is your duty to follow the example of the sailors, and to try first to come to land; perhaps even it might not be excess of presumption to suggest to you that many men follow the broad way, and that when there are a few who

direct themselves to the narrow gate that leads to life, it would be better for you to encourage than to hinder them, lest you fall under the condemnation of that text which says, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.' The harder the struggle, the more glorious is the crown. They, says St. Gregory, who do not avoid the visible evil can scarcely believe in the hidden good. For this reason St. Jerome enjoins the bishops to imitate the apostles, and the monks to follow the fathers, who have been perfect. The rules of the priests and those of the monks are very different; let each keep faithfully the profession which he has embraced, but let all follow the Gospel and Christ their head. . . . Yet pray for us, as we, despite our lowliness, pray for you. Regard us not as strangers to you; for all of us, whether Gauls or Britons, Spaniards or others, are members of the same body. I pray you all, my holy and patient fathers and brethren, to forgive the loquacity and boldness of a man whose task is above his strength." [33]

When we think that neither in the life of Columbanus himself, which is written in minute detail, nor in the history of his age, is there any trace of repression or even of serious censure, directed against the foreign monk who thus set him-

[33] "Dominis sanctis et in Christo patribus vel fratribus episcopis, presbyteris, cæterisque S. Ecclesiæ ordinibus, Columba peccator, salutem in Christo præmitto. — Gratias ago Deo meo quod mei causa in unum tanti congregati sunt sancti. . . . Utinam sæpius hoc ageretis. . . . Hoc potissimum debuit vobis inesse studium. . . . Multum nocuit nocetque ecclesiasticæ paci diversitas morum et varietas traditionum. . . . Unum deposco a vestra sanctitate . . . ut, quia hujus divinitatis auctor non sum, ac pro Christo Salvatore communi Domino et Deo in has terras peregrinus processerim, ut mihi liceat . . . in his silvis silere et vivere juxta ossa nostrorum fratrum decem et septem defunctorum sicut usque nunc licuit nobis inter vos vixisse duodecim annis, ut pro vobis, sicut usque nunc fecimus, oremus, ut debemus. Capiat nos simul, oro, Gallia, quos capiet regnum cœlorum, si boni simus meritis. . . . Hi sunt nostri canones, dominica et apostolica mandata. . . . Hæc arma, scutum et gladium . . . hæc nos moverunt de patria: hæc et hic servare contendimus, licet tepide . . . in his perseverare optamus sicut et seniores nostros facere conspeximus. . . . Vos, patres sancti, videte quid faciatis ad istos veteranos pauperes et peregrinos senes. . . . Confiteor conscientiæ meæ secreta, quod plus credo traditioni patriæ meæ. . . . Alia enim sunt et alia clericorum et monachorum documenta, et longe ab invicem separata. . . . De cætaro, patres, orate pro nobis, sicut et nos facimus, viles licet, pro vobis; et nolite nos a vobis alianos repulsare: unum enim corporis sumus commembra, sive Galli, sive Britanni, sive Iberi, sive quæque gentes. . . . Date veniam meæ loquacitati ac procacitati supra vires laboranti, patientissimi atque sanctissimi patres quique et fratres." — *Epist.* ii. ap. GALLANDUS, *Bibl. Veter. Patr.*, t. xii. p. 347.

self forth as a master and judge of the bishops, we cannot but admire this proof of the liberty then enjoyed by Christians, even where the rights of authority might have been most jealously preserved.

It is, however, doubtful whether this attitude had not shaken the influence which the virtues and sanctity of Columbanus had won for him among the Gallo-Franks. But he soon recovered it entirely in the conflict for the honor of Christian morals, which he undertook against Queen Brunehault and her grandson, and which we must relate in some detail, because this struggle was the first, and not the least remarkable, of those which arose on various occasions between the monks and Christian kings, who had been so long and naturally allied.

His struggle with King Thierry II. and Brunehault.

The Frank government in Gaul was, as is known, naturally divided into three distinct kingdoms, Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundy. The ancient kingdom of the Burgondes or of Burgundy, finally conquered by the sons of Clovis, had been reconstituted by his grandson Gontran, the same who gave so good a reception to Columbanus, and it was at the northern extremity of this kingdom that Luxeuil was founded. Gontran having died without issue, Burgundy passed to his nephew, the young Childebert II., already king of Austrasia, the son of the celebrated Brunehault. He died shortly after, leaving two sons under age, Theodebert II. and Thierry II. The succession was divided between them: Theodebert had Austrasia, and Thierry, Burgundy; but their grandmother Brunehault immediately constituted herself their guardian and took possession of the power royal in the two kingdoms, whilst her terrible enemy, Fredegund, whom Gontran had so justly named *the enemy of God and man*, governed Neustria in the name of her son Clotaire II., who was also a minor. The whole of Frankish Gaul was thus in the hands of two women, who governed it in the name of three kings, all minors.[34] But shortly the great feudal lords of Austrasia, among whom the indomitable independence of the Franks had been preserved more unbroken than among the Neustrians, disgusted by the violent and arbitrary bearing of Brunehault, obliged the eldest of her grandsons to expel her from his kingdom. She consoled herself by es-

593.

596.

599.

[34] Fredegund died a short time after, in 597, triumphing over all her enemies.

tablishing her residence with the young king Thierry in Burgundy, where she continued to exercise over the Burgundian nobles and bishops that haughty and often cruel sway which had made her presence intolerable in Austrasia.

To identify Brunehault in any degree with her impure and sinister rival, who was at once much more guilty and more prosperous than she, would be to judge her too severely. Gregory of Tours has praised her beauty, her good manners, her prudence and affability; and Gregory the Great, in congratulating the Franks on having so good a queen, honored her with public eulogiums, especially in his celebrated diploma relative to St. Martin of Autun, which she had built and endowed richly upon the spot where the holy bishop of Tours, going into the country of the Eduens, had destroyed the last sanctuary of vanquished paganism at the peril of his life. This abbey, long celebrated for its wealth and for its flourishing schools, became afterwards the sepulchre of Brunehault; and, nine centuries after her cruel death, a daily distribution to the poor, called *the alms of Brunehault*,[35] kept her memory popular still.

Monastery of St. Martin of Autun founded by Brunehault.

But Brunehault, as she grew old, retained only the dauntless warmth of her early years; she preserved neither the generosity nor the uprightness. She sacrificed everything to a passion for rule, and to the temptation of re-establishing a kind of Roman monarchy.[36] This thirst for sovereignty led her so far — she, whose youth had been without reproach — as to encourage her grandsons in that polygamy which seems to have been the melancholy privilege of the Germanic and especially of the Merovingian princes.[37] From the fear of having a rival in power and honor near the throne of Thierry, she opposed with all her might every attempt to replace his concubines by a legitimate queen, and when, finally, he determined on espousing a Visigoth princess, Brunehault, though herself the daughter of a Visigoth king, succeeded in dis-

[35] S. Greg. Magn., *Epist.*, xiii. 6; Greg. Turon., *Hist. Eccl.*, iv. 27. The Abbey of St. Martin of Autun possessed, according to the Burgundian tradition, as many as a hundred thousand *manses*. The church, rebuilt with magnificence in the ninth century, was razed in 1750 by the monks themselves; they built another, which met with the same fate in 1808. The plough has since then passed over the site of the church and monastery. There is a valuable monograph of this abbey published by M. Bulliot, Autun, 1849, 2 vols.

[36] Henri Martin, ii. 106.

[37] "Ob nobilitatem plurimis nuptiis ambiuntur." — Tacit., *De Mor. Germ.*, c. 18.

gusting her grandson with his bride, and made him repudiate her at the end of a year. The bishop of Vienne, St. Didier, who had advised the king to marry, was murdered by the ruffians whom the queen-mother had laid in wait for him. 607-608.

However, the young Thierry had religious instincts. He was rejoiced to possess in his kingdom a holy man like Columbanus. He went often to visit him. Irish zeal took advantage of this to reprove him for his disorderly life, and to exhort him to seek the sweetness of a legitimate spouse, that the royal race might flow from an honorable queen, and not from prostitution. The young king promised amendment, but Brunehault easily turned him away from these good resolutions. Columbanus having gone to visit her at the manor of Bourcheresse, she presented to him the four sons whom Thierry already had by his concubines. "What would these children with me?" said the monk. "They are the sons of the king," said the queen; "strengthen them by thy blessing." "No!" answered Columbanus, "they shall not reign, for they are of bad origin." From that moment Brunehault swore war to the death against him. She began by debarring the monks of the monastery governed by Columbanus from leaving their convent, and the people from receiving them or giving them the slightest help. Columbanus endeavored to enlighten Thierry and lead him back to a better way. He went to visit him at his royal seat of Epoisses. Hearing that the abbot had arrived, but would not enter the palace, the king sent him a sumptuous repast. Columbanus refused to accept anything from the hand of him who forbade the servants of God to have access to the homes of other men, and at the sound of his curse, all the vessels which contained the various meats were miraculously broken in pieces. The king, alarmed by that wonder, came with his grandmother to ask his pardon, and to promise amendment. Columbanus, mollified, returned to his monastery, where he soon learned that Thierry had fallen back into his habitual debauchery. Then he wrote to the king a letter full of vehement reproaches, in which he threatened him with excommunication.[38]

Thus, this stranger, this Irish missionary, the obliged guest

[38] "Gratulabatur quia in termino regni sui B. Columbanum haberet. . . . Ut non potius legitimæ conjugis solamine frueretur, ut regalis proles ex honorabili regina proderet, et non ex lupanaribus videretur emergi. . . . Apud Spissiam villam publicam. . . . Litteras verberibus plenas . . ." — JONAS, c. 31, 32.

of King Gontran, would venture to go the length of excommunicating the King of Burgundy, the heir of his benefactor! Brunehault had no difficulty in raising the principal leudes of the court of Thierry against that unaccustomed boldness; she even undertook to persuade the bishops to interfere in order to censure the rule of the new institution. Excited by all that he heard going on around him, Thierry resolved to take the offensive, and presented himself at Luxeuil to demand a reckoning with the abbot, why he went against the customs of the country, and why the interior of the convent was not open to all Christians, and even to women; for it was one of the grievances of Brunehault, that Columbanus had interdicted even her, although queen, from crossing the threshold of the monastery. The young king went as far as the refectory, saying that he would have the entrance free to all, or that they must give up all royal gifts. Columbanus, with his accustomed boldness, said to the king, "If you would violate the severity of our rules, we have no need of your gifts: and if you would come here to destroy our monastery, know that your kingdom shall be destroyed with all your race."

The king was afraid and went out; but he soon replied: "Thou art in hopes perhaps that I will procure thee the crown of martyrdom; but I am not fool enough for that; only, since it pleases thee to live apart from all relation with the secular people, thou hast but to return whence thou camest, even to thy own country." All the nobles of the royal suite exclaimed that they would no longer tolerate in their land men who thus isolated themselves from the world. Columbanus replied that he would leave his monastery only when taken from it by force. He was then taken and conducted to Besançon, to wait there the ultimate orders of the king.[39] After which a sort of blockade was established round Luxeuil to prevent any one from leaving it.

Columbanus expelled from Luxeuil for the first time.

610.

St. Agilus.

The monks then recollected that they had among them a young man called Agilus, son of that Agnoald, prime minister of Gontran, who, twenty years before,

[39] "Ea maxime pro causa infesta erat eo quod . . . sibi quæ regina erat idem contradixerat." — *Vita S. Agili*, c. 7, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. "Ut erat audax, atque animo vigens. . . . Si ob hanc causam hoc in loco venisti. . . . Martyrii coronam me tibi illaturum speras: non esse me tantæ dementiæ scias. . . . Qua veneras, ea via repedare studeas. . . . Aulicorum consona voce vota prorumpunt." — Jonas, c. 23.

had obtained for Columbanus the gift of Luxeuil, and who afterwards intrusted his son, then a child, to the Irish abbot to be trained in monastic life. They charged Agilus with the mission of obtaining the abolition of this interdict from the king and queen. The young monk fell into the hands of a nephew of the Duke of Sequania, who, under pretence of hunting, guarded the avenues of the monastery; but by the sign of the cross, he made the sword fall, and withered the arm which was raised to strike him, and was permitted to proceed on his way. By one of these sudden and transitory compunctions so frequent in the life of the Merovingians, Thierry and his grandmother received the envoy of the monks with demonstrations of humility, prostrated themselves before him, raised the blockade of the monastery, and even made him costly presents.[40]

Columbanus at Besançon.

But their hearts were not softened in respect to Columbanus. He, surrounded at Besançon by the respect of all, and left at freedom in the town, took advantage of it to ascend one morning to the height of a rock, on which the citadel is now situated, and which is encircled by the tortuous stream of the Doubs.[41] From this height he surveyed the road which led to Luxeuil; he seemed to investigate there the obstacles which prevented his return. His resolution was taken; he descended, left the town, and directed his steps towards his monastery. At the news of his return, Thierry and Brunehault sent a count with a cohort of soldiers to lead him back into exile. Then ensued a scene which, during twelve centuries, and even in our own days, has been often repeated between the persecutors and their victims. The messengers of the royal will found him in the choir, chanting the service with all his community. "Man of God," they said, "we pray you to obey the king's orders and ours, and to return from whence you came." "No," answered Columbanus, "after having left my country

[40] "Sub obtentu venantium . . . observabant exitus monasterii more latronum. . . . Rex et regina . . . humo coram vestigiis illius procumbunt."—*Vita S. Agili*, c. 7, 8.

[41] The description which Jonas gives of this spot is even at the present time strikingly correct, and was especially so before Louis XIV., after the conquest of Franche-Comté, had demolished the cathedral of St. Etienne and all the buildings which covered the sides of the rock: "Adscendet dominica die in verticem arduum ad cacumen montis illius (ita enim situs urbis habetur, cum domorum densitas in diffuso latere proclivi montis sita sit, prorumpant ardua in sublimibus cacumina quæ undique abscissi fluminis *Doux* alveo vallante nullatenus commeantibus viam pandit), ibique usque ad medium diei exspectat, si aliquis iter ad monasterium revertendi prohibeat."

for the service of Jesus Christ, I cannot think that my Creator means me to return." At these words the count withdrew, leaving the most ferocious of his soldiers to accomplish the rest. Subdued by the firmness of the abbot, who repeated that he would yield only to force, they threw themselves on their knees before him, weeping and entreating him to pardon them, and not to oblige them to use the violence which they were compelled to employ, on pain of their life. At the thought of a danger which was no longer personal to himself the intrepid Irishman yielded, and left the sanctuary which he had founded and inhabited for twenty years, but which he was never to see again.[42]

590-610.

His monks surrounded him with lamentations as if they were following his funeral. He consoled them by telling them that this persecution, far from being ruinous to them, would only promote the increase of "the monastic nation." They would all have followed him into exile; but a royal order forbade that consolation to any but the monks of Irish or Britannic origin. Brunehault was anxious to free herself from these audacious and independent islanders as well as from their leader, but she had no desire to ruin the great establishment of which Burgundy was already proud. The saint, accompanied by his Irish brethren, departed into exile.

The history of his journey, carefully recorded by his disci-

[42] "Vir Dei, precamur . . . eo itinere quo primum adventasti. . . . Non reor . . . semel natali solo ob Christi timorem relicto. . . . Relictis quibusdam quibus ferocitas animi inerat." — JONAS, c. 36. How can we fail to be struck with the identity of the struggles and triumphs of the Church throughout all ages, when we see what passed at Luxeuil, in 610, renewed, after twelve centuries, against the poor monks in Caucasia? We read in the *Journal des Debats* of April 23, 1845: "We publish some details of the expulsion of the Catholic missionaries from the provinces of Caucasia. On the first day of the year, two carts, escorted by Cossacks armed with lances and pistols, stopped before the gate of the Convent of Tiflis. Some of the agents of police immediately entered the convent and ordered the monks to get into the carts. The latter declared that they would only surrender to force; then they entered the church of the convent and knelt before the altar. The agents waited for some time; but when at the end of an hour they saw that the monks did not manifest any intention of obeying, they repeated to them the order to depart. The missionaries answered that they would not voluntarily quit the post which had been confided to them by their spiritual head. This answer was conveyed to General Gurko, Governor of Tiflis, who ordered them to be brought out by force and removed into the carts. The order was immediately executed. The missionaries of Gori were expelled in the same manner." The same journal relates, in its next day's number, how similar violences were exercised, no longer in the Caucasus, but in France, upon the Hospitaller nuns of St. Joseph at Avignon, in the same month of April, 1845. The expulsion of the Irish and English monks of La Trappe of Melleray, in 1831, bears also some features of resemblance to the history of Luxeuil.

ples, is full of information respecting the places and customs of Frankish Gaul. He was taken through Besançon a second time, then through Autun, Avallon, along the Cure and the Yonne to Auxerre, and from thence to Nevers, where he embarked upon the Loire. He marked each stage of his journey by miraculous cures and other wonders, which, nevertheless, did not diminish the rancor which he had excited. On the road to Avallon, he met an equerry of King Thierry, who attempted to pierce him with his lance. At Nevers, at the moment of embarking, a cruel hanger-on of the escort took an oar and struck Lua, one of the most pious of Columbanus's companions, to quicken his entrance into the boat. The saint cried, "Cruel wretch, what right hast thou to aggravate my trouble? How darest thou to strike the weary members of Christ? Remember that the divine vengeance shall await thee on this spot where thou hast struck the servant of God." And in fact, on his return, this wretch fell into the water and was drowned on the very spot where he had struck Lua.[43]

His journey to Besançon and Nantes.

Arrived at Orleans, he sent two of his brethren into the town to buy provisions; but no one would either sell or give them anything in opposition to the royal orders. They were treated as outlaws — enemies of the king, whom the Salic law forbade his subjects to receive, under the penalty (enormous in those days) of six hundred deniers. Even the churches were closed against them by the king's orders. But, in retracing their steps, they met a Syrian woman, one of that Oriental colony whose presence in Gaul has been already remarked under Childebert I. She asked them whence they came, and, on hearing, offered them hospitality, and gave them all that they needed. "I am a stranger like you," she said, "and I come from the distant sun of the East." She had a blind husband, to whom Columbanus restored sight. The people of Orleans were touched by this incident; but they dared only testify their veneration for the exile in secret.[44]

A Syrian woman receives them hospitably at Orleans.

[43] "Velut funus subsequentibus. . . . Ob multiplicandas plebes monachorum hanc esse datam occasionem. . . . Quos sui ortus terra dederat, vel qui a Britannico arvo ipsum secuti. . . . Custos equorum . . . occurrit. . . . Ubi lento conamine in scapham insilirent. . . . Arrepto remo. . . . Cur crudelis mœrorem mihi addis."— Jonas, c. 36, 38, 40. Mabillon (*Annal.*, t. i. p. 293) supposes that this Lua might be the Irish saint of whom St. Bernard speaks as having founded a hundred monasteries; but nothing could be more improbable.

[44] *Lex Salica*, art. 56, edit. Merkel. Roth, *Benefizialwesen*, p. 140. "Regio timore aut vendere aut dare nihil audebant. . . . Nam et ego advena

Passing before the town of Tours, Columbanus begged to be permitted to pray at the tomb of the great St. Martin, who was equally venerated by the Celts, Romans, and Franks; but his savage guardians ordered the boatmen to increase the speed of their oars, and keep in the middle of the stream. However, an invisible force stayed the boat; it directed itself towards the port. Columbanus landed, and spent the night near the holy tomb. The Bishop of Tours found him there, and took him to dine in his house. At table he was asked why he was returning to his own country. He answered, "This dog of a Thierry has hunted me from the home of my brethren." Then one of the company, who was a leude or trusty vassal of the king, said, in a low voice, "Would it not be better to give men milk to drink rather than wormwood?" "I see," answered Columbanus, "that thou wouldst keep thy oath to King Thierry. Well! say to thy friend and thy lord, that three years from this time he and his children will be destroyed, and that his whole race shall be rooted out by God." "Why do you speak thus, servant of God?" said the leude. "I cannot keep silent," answered the saint, "what God has charged me to speak." [45]

His letter to the monks of Luxeuil.

Arrived at Nantes, and on the eve of leaving the soil of Gaul, his thoughts turned towards Luxeuil, and he wrote a letter, which begins thus: "To his dearest sons, his dearest pupils, to his brethren in abstinence, to all the monks, Columbanus the sinner." In this he pours out his heart. Obscure, confused, passionate, interrupted by a thousand different recollections and emotions, this letter is, notwithstanding, the most complete monument of his genius and character which Columbanus has left to us. With these personal sentiments his concern for the present and future destiny of his beloved community of Luxeuil is always mingled. He sets forth the arrangements most likely, as he believes, to guarantee its existence, by purity of elections and internal harmony. He seems even to foresee the immense development of monastic colonies which was to proceed from Luxeuil, in a passage where he says, "Wherever sites are suitable, wherever God will build with you, go and multiply, you and the myriads of souls which shall be born of you." [46]

sum ex longinquo Orientis sole . . . vir meus ex eodem genere Syrorum sicut et ego." — JONAS, c. 41.

[45] "Canis me Theodoricus meis a fratribus abegit. . . . Humili voce . . . si melius esset lacte potari quam absynthio? . . . Cognosco te regis Theodorici fœdera velle servare. . . . Amico tuo et domino."

[46] "Si vero vobis placent, et Deus illic vobiscum ædificat, crescite ibi benedictione in mille millia."

It is specially delightful to see how, in that austere and proud soul, friendship and paternal affection preserve all their rights. He recalls to mind with tender solicitude a brother who was not present at the moment of his farewell; "Always take care," he says, "of Waldolenus, if he is still with you. May God give him everything that is good; may he become humble: and give him for me the kiss which I could not give him myself." He exhorts his monks to confidence, spiritual strength, patience, but, above all, to peace and union. He foresees in that perpetual question about Easter a cause of division; and he desires that those who would disturb the peace of the house should be dismissed from it. Confessions, counsels, and exhortations crowd upon his pen. He sometimes addresses the whole community, sometimes a monk called Attalus, whom he had named as his successor.

"Thou knowest, my well-beloved Attalus, how little advantage it is to form only one body if there is not also one heart. . . . As for me, my soul is rent asunder. I have desired to serve everybody, I have trusted everybody, and it has made me almost mad. Be thou wiser than I: I would not see thee taking up the burden under which I have sweated. To bind all in the enclosure of the Rule, I have attempted to attach again to the root of our tree all those branches whose frailty had separated them from mine. . . . However, thou art already better acquainted with it than I. Thou wilt know how to adapt its precepts to each. Thou wilt take into account the great diversity of character among men. Thou wilt then diversify thyself, thou wilt multiply thyself for the good of those who shall obey thee with faith and love, and yet must still fear lest that very love should become for thee a danger. But what is this that I do? Behold how I persuade thee to undertake the immense labor from which I myself have stolen away!"

Further on, grief carries him away, and bursts forth only to yield immediately to invincible courage: and the recollections of classic antiquity mingle with evangelical instructions to dictate to our Irishman some of the finest and proudest words which Christian genius has ever produced. "I had at first meant to write thee a letter of sorrow and tears, but knowing well that thy heart is overwhelmed with cares and labors, I have changed my style, I have sought to dry thy tears rather than to call them forth. I have permitted only gentleness to be seen outside, and chained down grief in the depths of my soul. But my own tears begin to flow! I

must drive them back; for it does not become a good soldier to weep in front of the battle. After all, this that has happened to us is nothing new. Is it not what we have preached every day? Was there not of old a philosopher wiser than the others, who was thrown into prison for maintaining, against the opinion of all, that there was but one God? The gospels also are full of all that is necessary to encourage us. They were written for that purpose, to teach the true disciples of Christ crucified to follow him, bearing their cross. Our perils are many: the struggle which threatens us is severe, and the enemy terrible; but the recompense is glorious, and the freedom of our choice is manifest. Without adversaries, no conflict; and without conflict, no crown. Where the struggle is, there is courage, vigilance, fervor, patience, fidelity, wisdom, firmness, prudence: out of the fight, misery and disaster. Thus, then, without war, no crown! And I add, without freedom, no honòr!"

However, he had to come to a conclusion, and knew not how to do it; for he always begins again, and often repeats himself. But others interrupted and put an end to the outpouring of his heart. "While I write," says he, "they come to tell me that the ship is ready — the ship which is to carry me back against my will to my country. . . . The end of my parchment obliges me to finish my letter. Love is not orderly: it is this which has made it confused. I would have abridged everything that I might say everything: I have not succeeded. Adieu, dear hearts; pray for me that I may live in God." [47]

[47] "Dulcissimis filiis, discentibus carissimis, fratribus frugalibus, cunctis simul monachis. . . . Semper Waldolenum tene . . . humilis fiat: et meum illi da osculum quod tunc festinans non habuit. . . . Tu scis, amantissime Attale . . . quid enim prodest habere corpus, et non habere cor? . . . Dum volui totos adjuvare . . . et dum omnibus credidi pene, factus sum stultus. Ideo tu prudentior esto: nolo subeas tantum onus, sub quo ego sudavi. . . . Ergo diversus esto, et multiplex ad curam eorum, qui tibi obedierint cum fide et amore: sed tu et ipsum eorum time amorem, quia tibi periculosus erit. . . . Lacrymosam tibi volui scribere epistolam: sed quia scio cor tuum idcirco necessariis tantum allegatis, duris et ipsis arduisque, altero stylo usus sum, malens obturare quam provocare lacrymas. Foris itaque actus est sermo mitis, intus inclusus est dolor. En promanant lacrymæ; sed melius es obturare fontem: non enim fortis est militis plorare. Non est hoc novum quod nobis contigit: hoc maxime quotidie prædicabamus. Quidam philosophus olim, sapientior cæteris, eo quod contra omnium opinionem unum Deum esse dixerit, in carcerem trusus est. Evangelia plena sunt de hac causa et inde sunt maxime conscripta: hæc est enim veritas Evangelii, ut vere Christi crucifixi discipuli eum sequantur cum cruce. . . . Multa carne pericula: cognosce causam belli, gloriæ magnitudinem, fortem non nescias hostem, et libertatem in medio arbitrii. . . . Si tollis hostem, tollis et pugnam. Si tollis pugnam, tollis et coronam. . . . Si tollis libertatem, tollis dignitatem.

The bishop and count of Nantes hastened the departure; but the Irish vessel in which the property and companions of Columbanus were embarked, and to which he was to go in a boat, being then at the mouth of the Loire, was cast back by the waves, and remained three days ashore upon the beach. Then the captain landed the monks and all that belonged to them, and continued his voyage. Columbanus was permitted to go where he would.

He goes to the kings of Neustria and Austrasia.

He directed his steps towards the court of the King of Soissons and Neustria, Clotaire II., who, after an unfortunate war with the kings of Austrasia and Burgundy, had been despoiled of the greater part of Neustria, and reduced to the possession of twelve counties between the right bank of the Seine and the Channel.[48] This son of Frédegund, faithful to his mother's hatred for Brunehault and her family, gave a cordial reception to the victim of his enemy, endeavored to retain him in his court, received with a good grace the remonstrances which the undaunted apostle, always faithful to his part of public censor, addressed to him upon the disorders of his court, and promised amendment. He consulted Columbanus about the quarrel which had broken out between the two brothers, Theodebert and Thierry, both of whom asked his assistance. Columbanus advised him to have nothing to do with it, since in three years both their kingdoms would fall into his power. He afterwards asked an escort to conduct him to Theodebert, king of Metz, or Austrasia, whose states he desired to cross on his way to Italy. Passing through Paris, Meaux, and Champagne, the chiefs of the Frank nobility brought their children to him, and he blessed many, destined, as shall be seen, to inherit his spirit and extend his work. Theodebert, now at war with his brother Thierry, gave the exiled abbot the same reception as Clotaire II. had done, but was equally unsuccessful in retaining him.

At the court of the king of Austrasia, which was not far from Burgundy, he had the consolation of seeing several of

. . . Nunc mihi scribenti nuncius supervenit, narrans mihi navem parari. Amor non tenet ordinem; inde missa confusa est. Totum dicere volui in brevi. Totum non potui. . . . Orate pro me, viscera mea, ut Deo vivam." — *Epist.*, iv., ap. GALLANDUS, *Bibl. Veter. Patrum*, t. xii. p. 349.

[48] Thierry had added, on that occasion, all the country between Seine and Loire to the ancient kingdom of Orleans and Burgundy. This explains why his authority was recognized in all the countries traversed by Columbanus even to Nantes.

his brethren of Luxeuil, who escaped to rejoin him. At their head, and encouraged by the promises and eager protection of Theodebert, he made up his mind to preach the faith among the still pagan nations who were subject to the Austrasian government, and inhabited the countries about the Rhine. This had always been his ambition, his inclination, and the work he preferred.[49] After sixty years of labor devoted to the reform of kings and nations already Christian, he began the second phase of his life — that of preaching to the infidels.

He becomes a missionary.

He consequently embarked upon the Rhine, below Mayence, and ascending this river and its tributaries as far as the Lake of Zurich, remained for some time at Tuggen,[50] and at Arbon, finding here and there some traces of Christianity sown under the Roman or Frank government,[51] and established himself finally at Bregentz, upon the Lake of Constance, amid the ruins of an ancient Roman town. The Sueves and Alamans (*Alamanni*), subject to the Franks since the victory of Clovis at Tolbiac, who then occupied all Eastern Helvetia, were, with all the country between the Aar, the Alps, and the Lech, idolaters, worshippers of the god Woden, and of violent and cruel disposition. In announcing the Gospel to them, Columbanus displayed all the impetuosity of his temper, which age had not lessened. His principal assistant was another Irishman named Gall, who was not less daring than himself, but who was well educated, and had the gift of preaching in the German language as well as in the Latin. Sometimes they broke the boilers in which the pagans prepared beer,[52] to offer as a

His mission among the Alamans with St. Gall.

[49] "Mei voti fuit gentes visitare et Evangelium eis a nobis prædicari: sed fel modo referente eorum teporem, pene meum tulit inde amorem."—*Epist. ad Fratres.*

[50] The new Bollandists (t. vii. Oct. p. 870) prove that this was not at Zug, as all former historians have said, but at Tuggen, which is situated at the point where the Limmat enters the Lake of Zurich, and which answers to the description of the hagiographer: "Ad caput lacus, in locum qui Tucconia dicitur." — *Vit. S. Galli*, c. 4.

[51] We shall be pardoned for not giving the legend of St. Fridolin, another Irish monk, to whom was attributed a first mission into Alamannia and the foundation of Sœckingen, on the Rhine, between Bâle and Schaffhausen. Compare MABILLON, *Ann. Bened.*, t. i. p. 221, and RETTBERG, t. ii. p. 33.

[52] The Italian monk who has written the life of Columbanus speaks elsewhere of beer as the national drink of the races which were not Roman: "Cerevisia quæ ex frumenti et hordei succo excoquitur, quamque præ cæteris in orbe terrarum gentibus, præter Scoticas et barbaras gentes quæ oceanum incolunt, usitatur in Gallia, Britannia, Hibernia, Germania, cæteræque quæ ab eorum moribus non desiscant." — Compare *Vit. S. Salabergæ*, c. 19, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., ii. 407.

sacrifice to Woden; sometimes they burned the temples, and threw into the lake the gilded idols whom the inhabitants showed them as the tutelary gods of their country. Such proceedings naturally excited against them the fury of the natives, and exposed them to great dangers. They had to flee to Zug, from which they were expelled with blows. At Bregentz they had more success, and made some conversions, but without appeasing the rage, or conciliating the liking, of the mass of the people. The little colony, however, remained there for three years. They resumed cenobitical life. They had at first to contend against hunger; for the inhabitants would give them nothing. They had to live upon wild birds, which came to them like the manna to the children of Israel, or upon woodland fruits, which they had to dispute with the beasts of the forests. But they had soon a garden of vegetables and fruit-trees. Fish was also a resource; Columbanus himself made the nets; Gall, the learned and eloquent preacher, threw them into the lake, and had considerable draughts. One night, while he watched in silence in his boat among his nets, he heard the demon of the mountain call to the demon of the waters. "Here I am," answered the latter. "Arise then," said the first, "and help me to chase away the strangers who have expelled me from my temple; it will require us both to drive them away." "What good should we do?" answered the demon of the waters; "here is one of them upon the waterside whose nets I have tried to break, but I have never succeeded. He prays continually, and never sleeps. It will be labor in vain; we shall make nothing of it." Then Gall made the sign of the cross, and said to them, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to leave these regions without daring to injure any one." Then he hastened to land and awoke the abbot, who immediately rang the bells for nocturnal service; but before the first psalm had been intoned, they heard the yells of the demons echoing from the tops of the surrounding hills, at first with fury, then losing themselves in the distance, and dying away like the confused voices of a routed army.[53]

Dialogue between demons on the lake.

[53] "Isti sunt dii veteres, et antiqui hujus locis tutores. . . . Non solum latinæ, sed etiam barbaricæ sermonis cognitionem non parvam habebat. . . . Irâ et furore commoti, gravi indignationis rabie turbidi recesserunt. . . . Audivit dæmonem de culmine montis pari suo clamantem qui erat in abditis maris, quo respondente: Adsum: Montanus . . . Consurge . . . in adjutorium mihi . . . Heus quod de tuis calamitatibus narras. . . . En unus illorum est in pelago cui nunquam nocere potero. . . . Auditæ sunt diræ voces

To this fine legend, which depicts so well all that could move the soul of these intrepid missionaries upon a coast so long inhospitable, we must add the vision which deterred Columbanus from undertaking a still more distant and difficult mission. He was pursued by the thought of bearing the light of the Gospel among the Sclave nations, and especially among the Wendes, whose country extended into the midst of the Germanic races, and to the south of the Danube. Like St. Patrick, the remembrance of the nations who knew not Christ pursued him into his sleep. One night he saw in a dream an angel, who said to him, "The world is before thee; take the right hand or the left hand, but turn not aside from thy road, if thou wouldst eat the fruit of thy labors."[54] He interpreted this dream into a sign that he should have no success in the enterprise of which he dreamed, and accordingly abandoned it.

Columbanus gives up the thought of converting the Sclave nations.

The Sclaves formed, as is well known, with the Celts and Germans, the third of the great races which occupied Central Europe. If Columbanus, a Celt by origin and education, but a monk and missionary for almost all his life among the Germans, had entered the countries already invaded by Sclavonian tribes, his influence would have been brought to bear upon all the families of nations who have predominated in modern Christendom. This glory was denied to him: it was enough for him to have been one of the most illustrious of those intermediary agents who have labored under the impulse of Christianity for the fusion of the two greatest races of the West.

He returns to Theodebert.

During this sojourn at Bregentz, our saint went, it is not known on what occasion, to see King Theodebert, who was still at war with his brother, the King of Burgundy. Enlightened by a presentiment, and

dæmonorum per montium summitates, et quasi discedentium ejulatus cum terrore confusus." — Walafr. Strabo., *Vit. S. Galli*, c. 4, 6, 7, ap. Pertz, *Monumenta*, ii. 7; Bolland., t. vii. Oct., p. 884; Act. SS. O. S. B., ii. 221. Compare Jonas, c. 54, 55; Kemble, *Saxons in England*, t. i. p. 380; lastly, Ozanam, *Etudes Germaniques*, ii. 122, who, as usual, has completely and nobly discussed the mission of Columbanus and his companions in Helvetia. The monastery of Mehrerau, which Columbanus founded, at the gates of the present town of Bregenz, has just been re-established by a colony of Cistercians, unworthily expelled by the Argovian Radicals from their secular patrimony at Wettingen, near Aarau.

[54] "Cogitatio in mentem ruit, ut Venetiorum, qui et Sclavi dicuntur, terminos adiret. . . . Cernis quod maneat totus orbis descriptus?" — Jonas, c. 56. Wendes are still to be found in Styria and Carinthia.

inspired by gratitude to this young prince, he counselled him to yield, and take refuge in the bosom of the Church, by becoming a monk, instead of risking at once his kingdom and his salvation. Theodebert had, besides, great need of expiating his sins: very profligate, like all the Merovingians, he had just killed Queen Bilichild, a young slave whom his grandmother Brunehault had made him marry in his youth, in order to be able to take another wife. The advice of Columbanus caused great laughter to the king and all the Franks who surrounded him. "Such a thing has never been heard of," said they, "as that a Frank king should become a monk of his own free will." "Well," said Columbanus, in the middle of their exclamations, "if he will not be a monk of free will, he will be one by force."[55] Saying this, the saint returned to his cell on the banks of Lake Constance. He learned soon after that his persecutor, Thierry, had again invaded the states of his protector Theodebert, and had routed and pursued the latter to the gates of Cologne. The decisive battle between the two brothers took place on the plains of Tolbiac, where their great-grandfather Clovis had founded, by victory, the Christian kingdom of the Franks.[56] Theodebert was vanquished and taken: Thierry sent him to the implacable Brunehault, who had long disowned him as her grandson, and who, still furious at her expulsion from the kingdom of Austrasia, had his head shaved, made him assume the monastic dress, and shortly after put him to death.

612.

Defeat and death of Theodebert.

At the time when the second battle of Tolbiac was going on, Columbanus was wandering in a wood near his retreat with his favorite disciple Cagnoald, a young and noble Frank, son of one of the principal leudes of Theodebert, whom he had brought with him from the neighborhood of Meaux. As he was reading, seated upon the fallen trunk of an old oak, he slept, and saw in a dream the two brothers coming to blows. At his waking he told his companion of this vision, sighing over all that bloodshed. The son of Theodebert's minister answered him, "But, dear father, help Theodebert

[55] "Ridiculum excitavit: aiebant enim nunquam se audiisse Merovingum in regno sublimatum voluntarium clericum fuisse. Detestantibus ergo omnibus." — JONAS, c. 57. This recalls the words of Childebert, quoted by Gregory of Tours: "Was ever a Merovingian shaven?" and the famous saying of Clotilde concerning her grandsons: "Better that they be dead than shaven." See the preceding Book, p. 461, note.

[56] HENRI MARTIN, ii. 118.

with your prayers, that he may overcome Thierry, your common enemy." Columbanus answered him, "Thou givest me a foolish counsel; not such was the will of our Lord, who commands us to pray for our enemies." [57]

However, the whole of Austrasia had fallen by the death of Theodebert into the hands of Brunehault and Thierry, and the banks of the upper Rhine, where their victim had found a refuge, was a dependency of the Austrasian kingdom. Besides, the inhabitants of the environs of Bregentz, always irritated by the violent destruction of their idols, complained to the duke of the province that these strangers scared the game of the royal chase, by infesting the forests with their presence. Their cows were stolen, two of the monks were even slain in an ambuscade. It was necessary to depart. Columbanus said, "We have found a golden cup, but it is full of serpents. The God whom we serve will lead us elsewhere." He had long desired to go to Italy, and reckoned on a good reception from the king of the Lombards. At the moment of departure, the fiery Gaul, seized with fever, asked leave to remain. Columbanus was irritated by this weakness. "Ah, my brother," said he, "art thou already disgusted with the labors I have made thee endure? But since thou wilt separate thyself from me, I debar thee, as long as I live, from saying mass." [58] Poor Gall did not deserve these reproaches; he remained in Helvetia, as will be seen, only to redouble the zeal of his apostolic labors, and to found there one of the most celebrated monasteries in Christendom.

Columbanus crosses the Alps and reaches Lombardy.

Columbanus kept with him only a single disciple, Attalus, and, notwithstanding, pursued his journey across the Alps. When we picture to ourselves the fatigues and dangers of such an undertaking in the days of Columbanus, we imagine that it was the image and recollection of this course which inspired the beginning of one of the instructions addressed to his monks, in which the unwearied traveller compares life to a journey.

"Oh mortal life! how many hast thou deceived, seduced, and blinded! Thou fliest and art nothing; thou appearest and art but a shade; thou risest and art but a vapor; thou

[57] "Super quercus putrefactæ truncum librum legens residebat. . . . Pater mi . . . ut communem debellet hostem." — JONAS, 57.

[58] "Discentes venationem publicam propter illorum infestationem peregrinorum esse turbatam. . . . Invenimus . . . concham auream, sed venenatis serpentibus plenam. . . . Scio, frater, jam tibi onerosum esse tantis pro me laboribus fatigari." — *Vita S. Galli*, c. 8, 9.

fliest every day, and every day thou comest; thou fliest in coming, and comest in flying, the same at the point of departure, different at the end; sweet to the foolish, bitter to the wise; those who love thee know thee not, and those only know thee who despise thee. What art thou, then, oh human life? Thou art the way of mortals and not their life; thou beginnest in sin and endest in death. Thou art then the way of life and not life itself. Thou art only a road, and an unequal road, long for some, short for others; wide for these, narrow for those; joyous for some, sad for others, but for all equally rapid and without return. It is necessary, then, oh miserable human life! to fathom thee, to question thee, but not to trust in thee. We must traverse thee without dwelling in thee — no one dwells upon a great road: we but march on through it, to reach the country beyond." [59]

Agilulf, king of the Lombards, and Theodelind.

The king of the Lombards was that Agilulf, of whom we have already had occasion to speak in connection with St. Gregory the Great; his wife was Theodelind, the noble rival of Clotilde. He received the venerable exile with respect and confidence; and Columbanus had scarcely arrived in Milan when he immediately began to write against the Arians, for this fatal heresy still predominated among the Lombards; those who had not remained pagan, especially among the nobles, had fallen victims to Arianism. The Irish apostle thus found a new occupation for his missionary zeal, which he could pursue successfully without giving up his love for solitude. Agilulf bestowed upon him a territory called Bobbio, situated in a retired gorge of the Apennines, between Genoa and Milan, not far from the famous shores of Trebbia, where Hannibal encamped and vanquished the Romans. An old church, dedicated to St. Peter, was in existence there. Columbanus undertook to restore it, and to add to it a monastery. Despite his age, he shared in the workmen's labors, and bent his old shoulders under the weight of enormous beams of fir-wood, which it seemed impossible to transport across the precipices and perpendicular paths of these mountains. This abbey of Bobbio was his last stage. He made it the citadel of orthodoxy against the Arians, and lighted

Foundation of Bobbio.

[59] "Nullus enim in via habitat, sed ambulat: ut qui ambulant in via habitent in patria." — *Instructio* v., *Quod præsens vita non sit dicenda Vita, sed Via.* I borrow this translation, completing it, from the *Vie des Saints de Franche-Comté*, t. ii. p. 91.

there a focus of knowledge and instruction which was long the light of northern Italy.[60]

His last poetry.

There, as everywhere, and throughout all his life, our saint continued to cultivate those literary studies which had charmed his youth. At sixty-eight he addressed to a friend an epistle in Adonic verse, which everywhere bears the impression of those classic recollections which the monks of that period cultivated. He prays him not to despise "these little verses by which Sappho, the illustrious muse, loved to charm her contemporaries, and to prefer for a moment these frivolous trifles to the most learned productions."[61] He appeals to the recollections of the Golden Fleece, of the judgment of Paris, of Danaë's shower of gold, and of the collar of Amphiaraüs. Then his thoughts grew sober as they rose. "Thus I wrote, overwhelmed by the cruel pains of my weak body, and by age, for, while the times hasten their course, I have reached the eighteenth olympiad of my life. Everything passes, and the irreparable days fly away. Live, be strong, be happy, and remind yourself of sad old age."[62]

His remonstrance with Pope Boniface IV.

To this last period of his life also belongs that letter, so differently interpreted, which he wrote to Pope Boniface IV. in the name of King Agilulf, who had scarcely escaped from the bonds of Arianism, when he unluckily undertook to protect the partisans of the *Three Chapters*, who called in question the orthodoxy of the Holy See, which, according to their view, had placed itself in opposition to a General Council.[63] Columbanus

[60] "Tum per prærupta saxorum scopula trabes ex abietibus inter densa saltus locis inaccessibilibus cæderentur. . . . Suis ac suorum humeris immane pondus imponebat." — Jonas, c. 60. The school and library of Bobbio rank among the most celebrated of the middle ages. Muratori has given a catalogue of 700 manuscripts which they possessed in the tenth century. Thence came the famous palimpsest from which Cardinal Mai has taken the *De Republica* of Cicero. The monastery was only suppressed under the French dominion in 1803: the church still subsists, and serves as a parish church.

[61] "Inclyta vates
Nomine Sapho
Versibus istis
Dulce solebat
Edere Carmen.
. . . Doctiloquorum
Carmina linquens,
Frivola nostra
Suscipe lætus."

[62] Translation by Ozanam.

[63] The *Three Chapters* (three works by Theodore of Mopsueste, Ibas, and Theodoret, were thus named) had been condemned as *Nestorian* by the Council of Constantinople (5th œcumenical) in 553, and by Pope Vigilant: a condemnation resisted by the bishops of Africa and Istria as throwing discredit on the Council of Chalcedon, which had, according to them, approved of these writings. The Lombards declared for these bishops, who were toler-

wrote from the midst of a mixed population of orthodox and schismatics, of heretics and even of pagans. Evidently little acquainted in his own person with the point at issue, he made himself the organ of the restlessness and defiance of the party which assumed to be the only one faithful to the doctrine of the Council of Chalcedon against the error or Eutychus. While he appeals, in a series of extravagant and obscure apostrophes, to the indulgence of the Pope for a *foolish Scot*, charged to write on account of a Lombard, a king of the Gentiles, he acquaints the pontiff with the imputations brought against him, and entreats him to prove his orthodoxy and excommunicate his detractors.[64] Doubtless some of the expressions which he employs would be now regarded as disrespectful and justly rejected. But in these young and vigorous times, faith and austerity could be more indulgent. If his letter is impressed with all the frankness and independence of the Celt, of the Briton, a little too biting,[65] as he says himself, it breathes also the tender and filial devotion of a Roman, impassioned in his anxiety for the honor of the Holy See. Let it be judged by this fragment: "I confess that I lament over the bad reputation of the chair of St. Peter in this country. I speak to you not as a stranger, but as a disciple, as a friend, as a servant. I speak freely to our masters, to the pilots of the vessel of the Church, and I say to them, Watch! and despise not the humble advice of the stranger. We Irish, who inhabit the extremities of the world, are the disciples of St. Peter and St. Paul, and of the other apostles who have written under dictation of the Holy Spirit. We receive nothing more than the apostolic and evangelical doctrine. There has never been either a heretic, a Jew, or a schismatic among us. The people whom I see here, who bear the burden of many heretics, are jealous; they disturb themselves like a frightened flock. Pardon me then, if, swimming among these rocks, I have said some words offensive to pious ears. The native liberty of my race has given me that boldness. With us it is not the person, it is the right which prevails. The love of evangelical peace makes me say every-

How he reconciles his Celtic patriotism with Roman orthodoxy.

ated by Gregory the Great on account of their zeal against the Arians; but under Boniface IV. the quarrel was revived. Agilulf and Theodelind engaged Columbanus in it.

[64] "Quando rex gentilis peregrinum scribere, Longobardus, Scotum hebetem rogat . . . quis non mirabitur potiusquam calumniabitur." — *Epist.* v. *ad. Bonif. Pap. ed.* GALLAND., p. 355.

[65] "Mordacius."

thing. We are bound to the chair of St. Peter; for however great and glorious Rome may be, it is this chair which makes her great and glorious among us. Although the name of the ancient city, the glory of Ausonia, had been spread throughout the world as something supremely august, by the too great admiration of the nations, for us you are only august and great since the incarnation of God, since the Spirit of God has breathed upon us, and since the Son of God, in his car drawn by these two ardent coursers of God, Peter and Paul, has crossed the oceans of nations to come to us. Still more, because of the two great apostles of Christ, you are almost celestial, and Rome is the head of the Churches of the whole world, excepting only the prerogative of the place of divine resurrection." [66]

The generous fervor of that Irish race, justly proud of having never known the yoke of pagan Rome, and of having waited, before recognizing her supremacy, till she had become the Rome of the apostles and martyrs, has never been expressed with more poetic energy.

But whilst the unwearied missionary had thus recommenced in Italy his career as a preacher and monastic founder, everything was changed among the Franks to whom he had devoted the half of his life. At the moment when the victorious persecutor of Columbanus seemed at the climax of his fortune, when he had joined the immense domains of the Austrasian kingdom to his own kingdom of Orleans and Burgundy, and when he had only the little state of Clotaire left to conquer, in order to reign over all Gaul and Frankish Germany, King Thierry suddenly died at the age of twenty-six. In vain did Brunehault essay to renew her reign in the name of her great-grandson, the young Sigebert, the eldest of Thierry's children: the leudes of Austrasia, who

Death of his persecutor, Thierry.

[66] "Doleo enim, fateor, de infamia cathedræ S. Petri. . . . Ego enim ut amicus, ut discipulus, ut pedissequus vester, non ut alienus loquar: ideo libere eloquar nostris utpote magistris, ac spiritualis navis gubernatoribus, ac mysticis proretis dicens: Vigilate. . . . Noli despicere consiliolum alienigenæ. . . . Nullus hæreticus, nullus judæus, nullus schismaticus fuit. . . . Populus quem video, dum multos hæreticos sustinet, zelosus est, et cito tanquam grex pavidus turbatur. . . . Libertas paternæ consuetudinis, ut ita dicam, me audere ex parte facit. Non enim apud nos persona, sed ratio valet: amor pacis evangelicæ totum me dicere cogit. . . . In duobus illis ferventissimis Dei spiritus equis, Petro et Paulo . . . per mare gentium equitans, turbavit aquas multas . . . et supremus ille auriga currus illius qui est Christus . . . ad nos usque pervenit. Ex tunc vos magni estis et clari . . . et, si dici potest, propter geminos apostolos . . . vos prope cœlestes estis et Roma orbis terrarum caput est Ecclesiarum . . ."

could never tolerate her haughty rule, and first among them the powerful chief Pepin, from whom the Carlovingian race proceeded, declared themselves against her. They leagued themselves on one side with the leudes of Burgundy, on the other with Clotaire and his Neustrians, and called the latter to reign over them. Brunehault and the four sons of Thierry were delivered up to him. He slaughtered the two eldest, and showed himself the worthy son of Fredegund by the atrocious sufferings which he inflicted upon her septuagenarian rival. Clotaire II., when he had become by all these crimes the sole king of the Franks and master of Austrasia and Burgundy as well as Neustria, remembered the prediction of Columbanus, and desired to see once more the saint who had prophesied so truly. He charged Eustace, who had succeeded him as abbot at Luxeuil, to go and seek his spiritual father, and sent with him a deputation of nobles, as a security for the good intentions of the king. Columbanus received Eustace gladly, and kept his visitor with him for some time that he might make him thoroughly acquainted with the spirit of the rule, which he was to establish among the "monastic nation" at Luxeuil. But he declined to answer the call of Clotaire: we would fain believe that all the innocent blood which that king had spilt had something to do with this refusal; but there is nothing to prove it. The abbot confined himself to writing him a letter full of good advice, which, it must be allowed, he had great need of, and recommending to him his beloved abbey of Luxeuil, which Clotaire indeed overwhelmed with gifts and favors.[67]

Clotaire II. recalls him to Austrasia.

He refuses,

As for Columbanus, he ended as he had begun, by seeking a solitude still more complete than that of the monastery which he had founded at Bobbio. He had found upon the opposite shore of Trebbia, in the side of a great rock, a cavern, which he transformed into a chapel, dedicated to the holy Virgin: there he passed his last days in fasting and prayer, returning to the monastery only for the Sundays and holidays. After his death this chapel was long venerated and much frequented by afflicted souls; and three centuries later, the annals of the monastery record, that those who had entered there sad and

And dies 21st November, 615.

[67] "Litteras castigationum affamine plenas Regi dirigit gratissimum munus. . . . Rex velut pignus fœderis viri Dei litteras ovans recepit." — JONAS, c. 61.

downcast had left it rejoicing, consoled by the sweet protection of Mary and of Columbanus.[68]

Such was the life of the illustrious founder of Luxeuil; less forgotten, we are bound to say, than others as worthy of recollection as himself, his memory has been brought to light anew in our own days, only to be made use of in a spirit hostile to the truth and authority of the Holy See.[69]

He was neither the enemy of royalty nor of the Papacy.

What, then, is there in this life which can justify the assumption which has attempted to raise the founder of Luxeuil into the chief of a political party, an enemy to royalty in his time, and, more than that, a schismatic, a contemner, or at least a rival, of the Papacy? Columbanus had neither the virtues nor the vices which make political men; he contended, not against royalty, but against a single king, and he waged this warfare solely in defence of the purity and dignity of Christian marriage. It is impossible to discover in his biography, so full of minute details, the least trace of a political tendency. Far from being an enemy to royalty, he was, without controversy, of all the great monks of his time, the one who had the most frequent and cordial intercourse with contemporary kings: with Clotaire, king of the Neustrians; Theodebert, king of the Austrasians; Agilulf, king of the Lombards. But he knew that virtue and truth are made for kings as well as for nations. History should admire in him monastic integrity struggling with the retrograde paganism of Merovingian polygamy, and the foreign missionary and solitary taking up at once, in face of the conquerors of Gaul, the freedom of the prophets of the ancient law against the crowned profligate: "I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed." This was the case, and nothing else; this is sufficient for his glory.

[68] "Inter cæteras virtutes . . . hæc præcipue viguit, sicut ab antecessoribus nostris audivimus, quod si aliquis tristis illic adveniebat, si ibi aliquam morulam haberet, interventu Sanctæ Virginis supradictique viri lætus exinde revertebatur." — *Mirac. S. Columb. a Monach. Bobiens. Sæc.* x., ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii., pp. 37, 38. Another tradition attributes to him the discovery of a rare and delicate vegetable in the heart of the rocks which he incessantly travelled over, which does not reproduce itself every year, and which the abbot of Bobbio sent to the kings and princes, *pro benedictione S. Columbani.* "Nam legumen Pis, quod rustici *Herbilium* vocant, ex adventu sui tempore per singulos annos sponte nascitur per illas rupes quas ipsi perambulavit, nullo serente et, quod nobis majus miraculum videtur, per scissuras petrarum ubi nullus humor adest." — *Mirac. S. Columb.*, c. 5.

[69] M. Gorini, in his *Défense de l'Eglise*, t. i., ch. x., has demolished the strange fancies of MM. Alexis de Saint-Priest, Michelet, &c., on the subject of the political and religious character of St. Columbanus.

In respect to the Holy See, if some traces of the harsh independence of his race and the frank boldness of his character are to be found in his language — if he must be blamed for defending and imposing on others, with wearisome obstinacy, the local and special observances of his own country — if he made himself ridiculous by offering advice to Pope Boniface IV. on a theological question, which he himself confesses he had not studied — it must be added that, even in his most vehement words, nothing implied the slightest doubt of the supreme authority of the Roman See. He says expressly that the pillar of the Church stands always firm at Rome; he expressly entitles the Pope the pastor of pastors, and *the prince of the chiefs*, whose duty it is to protect the army of the Lord in its perils, to organize everything, to regulate the order of war, to stimulate the captains, and, finally, to engage in the combat, marching himself at the head of the soldiers of God.[70]

This pretended Luther of the seventh century has then no right to any of those sympathies which have been recently bestowed on him. They have been addressed to the wrong individual. He was never the enemy of either kings or bishops. He was a formidable rival only to St. Benedict. Neither in his writings nor his life is there anything to indicate that this rivalry was intentional; it sprang naturally from his independent mind, strongly individual and even eccentric, from the passionate attachment with which he inspired so large a number of disciples, from the missionary impulse which he evidently possessed, but above all, from the Rule which he believed it his duty to write for the use of the monastic nation which he has collected under his crosier.[71] He never mentions the Rule of St. Benedict, though it was impossible that he could be ignorant of its existence, especially after he had gone to Lombardy.[72] But

His Rule.

[70] *Epist.* v., *ad. Bonifacium.* "Pulcherrimo omnium totius Europæ Ecclesiarum capiti. . . . Pastorum pastori."

[71] "His ergo in locis Monachorum plebibus constitutis. . . . Regulam quam tenerent Spiritu Sancto repletus condidit."

[72] Mabillon has fully acknowledged, in opposition to Yepes and Trithemius, that the Rule of Columbanus was not a simple modification of the Rule of Benedict; but it is impossible to admit the proof by which he assumes to establish that Columbanus, attracted to Italy by the fame of Benedict himself, had adopted the Rule of his predecessor and had introduced it at Bobbio. Contrary to all his habits, the prince of erudite Christians does not quote, in this instance, any contemporary text, or any fact, and limits himself to suppositions which neither agree with the life nor with the character of Columbanus. — Compare *Præfat. in Sæc.* ii., No. 14, and *in Sæc.* iv., n. 129-135.

he desired to introduce into Gaul a durable monument of the religious spirit of his country, of that powerful impulse which had fertilized monastic Ireland, and formed those immense collections of monks where, if he is to be believed, such a discipline reigned, that as many as a thousand *abbots* recognized the laws of a single superior, and such a union that, in certain houses, since their first foundation, there had never been a single dispute.[73]

This Rule, at once shorter, less distinct, and more severe than that of St. Benedict, agrees with it, notwithstanding, in its essential particulars, as the Benedictine Rule approaches, in many points, to the rules of the great solitaries of the East. It is not given to man, not even to the man of genius, to isolate himself from the efforts and experience of his predecessors, and no truly practical genius has attempted or even desired it. The first of the ten chapters which form the Rule of Columbanus treats of obedience; it was to be absolute and passive; there is no reservation, as in that of Benedict, of a judicious exercise of power on the part of the abbot, nor of the advisers by whom he was to be surrounded. The second imposes perpetual silence upon the monks, except for useful or necessary causes. The third reduces their food to the lowest rate possible: Benedict had granted meat to the weak and ailing, and a hemine of wine; Columbanus allowed only pulse, meal moistened with water, and a small loaf to all alike.[74] They were to eat only in the evening; fasting was to be a daily exercise, like work, prayer, or reading. Except Chapter VII., which establishes a very complicated and tediously prolonged order of services for the psalmody of the choir (seventy-five psalms and twenty-five anthems for the great feasts, thirty-six psalms and twelve anthems for the lesser), the other chapters treat of poverty, humility, chastity, discretion or prudence, and mortification, all virtues essential to the monastic condition, but which the author deals with rather as a preacher than a legislator. The tenth, and last, which is as long as all the others put

[73] "Et cum tanta pluralitas eorum sit, ita ut mille abbates sub uno archimandrita esse referantur, nulla ibi a conditione cœnobii inter duos monachos rixa fuisse fertur visa." — *Regula* S. Columbani, c. 7. The words *apud seniores nostros*, which are found at the beginning of this chapter, should be interpreted, not as referring to all Ireland, but to the monastery of Bangor, where Columbanus was a monk; but how is the thousand *abbots* in a single house to be explained, or how can the term *abbates* be regarded as synonymous with monks when the word *monachi* occurs in the same passage?

[74] "Cibus vilis et vespertinus . . . cum parvo panis paximatio." Fish, however, could not have been prohibited, since St. Gall and his master were perpetually occupied in fishing.

together, forms, under the title of *Penitentiary*, a sort of criminal code, in which a new contrast may be remarked with the Benedictine code, in the extreme severity of the penalties prescribed for the least irregularities. The rigid discipline used in the monasteries of Scotland and Ireland is here manifest by the prodigal use of beating, which is reserved in the Benedictine code for incorrigible criminals, and prescribed in the Penitentiary for the most insignificant omissions. The number of strokes inflicted on delinquents varied from six to two hundred. This penalty, however, must have appeared much less hard and less humiliating at that period, even to the sons of the great, of whom so large a number were reckoned among the disciples of Columbanus, than it would seem to the most obscure Christian of our own time, since the *maximum* of two hundred blows was regarded as the equivalent of two days' fasting on bread and water, and the choice of these penalties was allotted to the monk who should have spoken, without the presence of a third person, to a woman. He who, on a journey, should have slept under the same roof with a woman, had to fast three days on bread and water.[75]

The *Penitentiary*.

These excessive severities discouraged no one. Columbanus saw an army of disciples collect around him, in the sanctuaries which he had founded, up to the last day of his life. They were more numerous and more illustrious than those of Benedict. Inspired by the spirit of this great saint, pervaded by the vigorous life which flowed from him, like him self-willed, dauntless, and unwearied, they gave to the monastic spirit the most powerful, rapid and active impulse which it had yet received in the West. They extended it especially over those regions where that Franco-Germanic race, which hid in its skirts the future life of Christian civilization, was laboriously forming itself. By their means the genius and memory of Columbanus hover over the whole of the seventh century, of all the centuries the most fertile and illustrious in the number and fervor of the monastic establishments which it produced. However, we shall see before the century was completed, the rule and institu-

Disciples of Columbanus.

[75] "Si quis monachus dormierit in una domo cum muliere, tres dies in pane et aqua; si nescivit quod non debet, uno die." — M. Gorini, op. cit., tom. i. p. 420, and others, have sufficiently exposed the absurd error committed by M. Michelet, in his *Histoire de France* (tom. i. p. 286), where he translates these words as follows: "For the monk who has transgressed with a woman, two days of bread and water."

tion of the great Irishman everywhere replaced by the spirit and laws of his immortal predecessor. Columbanus had more of that fascination which attracts for a day, or for a generation, than of that depth of genius which creates for ages.

Let us endeavor, then, if we can, to trace a brief picture of this monastic mission of the sons of Columbanus, at once so laborious and so productive, the fruits of which, if they must not be exclusively attributed to the glory or authority of the Celtic missionary, did not the less enrich for a thousand years and more the treasures of the Church.

His successors at Bobbio.

One word, in the first place, upon the Lombard abbey where Columbanus completed his career.

Attalus.

615 662.

His successor was Attalus, a noble Burgundian. He had first been a monk at Lerins, but, cast back by the decay of that renowned sanctuary, had been drawn to Luxeuil by the fame of Columbanus, and was named by the latter as his successor after his expulsion from Burgundy.[76] But he preferred to join him in exile. After the death of the founder, the new abbot was troubled by an insurrection of the Italian monks, who declared themselves incapable of bearing so many austerities and so hard a discipline. He permitted them to go; they went to seek another resting-place, some among the neighboring mountains, some on the shores of the Mediterranean; several returned afterwards to the fold where Attalus continued the work of his master, struggling bravely against Arianism, which had found its last citadel among the conquering Lombards of northern Italy. He died at the foot of a crucifix which he had placed at the door of his cell that he might kiss the feet every time he went out or in, and was buried by the side of Columbanus.

Another stranger governed the monastery after him,

Bertulph.

627-640.

Bertulph, a noble Austrasian, and near relative of the famous Arnoul, bishop of Metz, the earliest known ancestor of that Carlovingian race which was soon to unite Gaul and Italy under its laws. Bertulph was born a pagan; the example of his cousin had converted him and led him to Luxeuil, from whence he followed Attalus to Bobbio. He was scarcely elected when he had to struggle with the bishop of Tortona, who wished to bring the abbey under his jurisdiction, and attempted to arm himself with the authority of Ariowald, king of the Lombards.

[76] *Epist. ad Fratres*, ubi supra.

The Arian Duke Ariowald and the orthodox monk of Bobbio.

This Ariowald, son-in-law and successor of Agilulf, did not promise to be a very zealous protector of the Irish abbey. Before he became king he had met one day in the streets of Pavia one of the monks of Bobbio, charged by the abbot Attalus with a mission for the capital of the Lombards. Seeing him from a distance, he said, "There is one of Columbanus's monks, who refuse to salute us." After which he himself saluted the monk derisively. The latter, whose name was Blidulf, answered that he would have saluted him willingly had he been irreproachable in matters of faith, and took advantage of the occasion to preach him a sermon upon the equality of the three persons of the Trinity. Ariowald, furious at this, posted two of his satellites to await the monk's return, and beat him to death. Blidulf, who had supped with an orthodox citizen of Pavia, was attacked in a remote place by these assassins, who beat him unmercifully, and left him on the ground for dead. At the end of some hours he was found by his host lying in his blood, but he raised himself up, despite his cruel wounds, saying that he had never slept a sweeter sleep.[77] This wonder roused popular opinion in favor of the monks of Bobbio, and their orthodox doctrine. Ariowald, confused and penitent, sent to the abbey to ask pardon, and offered gifts, which were refused. But we must believe that this adventure had a salutary impression on his soul; for after his accession to the throne, though still an Arian, he not only abstained from persecuting the orthodox monastery, but even from condemning it in its struggles with the bishop. "It is not my part," he said, "to know these priestly contentions: let them be judged by their synods."[78]

Bertulph, however, went to Rome to appeal to Pope Honorius, made him acquainted with the rule, and the customs followed in the new foundation, obtained his sovereign approbation, and returned furnished with a privilege which exempted from episcopal jurisdiction the monastery in which Columbanus had completed his course.[79]

[77] "Ex Columbani monachis iste est, qui nobis salutantibus denegant apta respondere. Cumque jam haud procul abesset, deridens salutem præmisit. . . . Percussus cerebro et omni compage corporis collisus, magnis fustium ictibus ac sudibus pulsatus. . . . Nihil ei respondit unquam suavius accessisse nec somnum dulciorem habuisse testatur." — Jonas, *Vita S. Bertulfi*, c. 14, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii.

[78] "Non meum est sacerdotum causas discernere quas synodalis examinatio ad purum decet adducere." — Jonas, *Vita S. Bertulfi*, c. 5.

[79] Jonas of Susa, a monk at Bobbio, as we have already said, has written,

Disciples of Columbanus in Helvetia.

Whilst the Franks of Burgundy and Austrasia, called to follow the great Irish monk into Lombardy, formed in a gorge of the Apennines a centre of energetic reaction against Arian heresy, against the effeminacy of the Italian monks, and the efforts of that paganism which still existed among the peasants,[80] the Irish monks, who had been expelled from Luxeuil with their illustrious compatriot, but who had followed him only to the foot of the Alps, sowed the seed amid the semi-pagan populations of Eastern Helvetia and of Rhætia. One of them, Sigisbert, separated from his master at the foot of the hill which has since been called St. Gothard, and crossing the glaciers and peaks of Crispalt, directing his steps to the East, arrived at the source of the Rhine, and from thence descended into a vast solitude, where he built a cell of branches near a fountain. The few inhabitants of these wild regions, who were still idolaters, surrounded him, admired him, and listened to him; but when he attempted to cut down the sacred oak, the object of their traditional worship, one of the pagans aimed an axe at his head. The sign of the cross disarmed this assailant: the work of conversion proceeded painfully, but with the support of a neighboring noble, who became a Christian and then a monk under the teachings of the Irish missionary, and who endowed with all his possessions the new-born monastery, which still exists under the name of Dissentis.[81] Thus was won and sanctified, from its very source, that Rhine whose waters were to bathe so many illustrious monastic sanctuaries.

Sigisbert founds Dissentis, near the source of the Rhine.

St. Gall.

Not far from the spot where the Rhine falls into Lake Constance, and a little to the south of the lake, Gall, cured of his fever, but deeply saddened by the departure of his master, chose a retreat which his name was to make immortal. A deacon, much given to hunting and fishing, pointed out to him a wild solitude enclosed within wooded

besides the biography of St. Columbanus, those of his two successors, and has dedicated them to Bobolène, fourth abbot of Bobbio, and of Frankish origin, like his predecessors. The names of the monks whom Jonas cites in his narrative seem to indicate the same Frankish origin: Mérovée, Blidulph, Theodald, Baudachaire.

[80] See the adventure of Mérovée the monk, who, going from Bobbio to Tortona, attempted to destroy a rustic temple (*fanum quoddam ex arboribus consitum*) which he found on the shores of the Serivia, and was beaten and thrown into the water by the *fani cultores*. — Jonas, lib. c. 16.

[81] Bucelinus, *Martyrol. Bened. II. Jul.*: Mabillon, *Ann. Bened.*, lib. xi. c. 20. The abbey of Dissentis, burned by the French in 1799, has since been rebuilt.

heights, with abundant streams, but inhabited by bears, boars, and wolves. "If the Lord is with us, who can be against us?" said Gall; and he set out with some provisions in his wallet, and a small net for fishing. Towards evening they arrived at the spot where the torrent of Steinach hollows a bed for itself in the rocks. As he walked on, praying, his foot caught in the brushwood and he fell. The deacon ran to raise him up. "No," said Gall: "here is my chosen habitation; here is my resting-place forever." There he arranged two hazel-boughs into the form of a cross, attached to it the relics which he carried round his neck, and passed the night in prayer. Before his devotions were concluded, a bear descended from the mountain to collect the remains of the traveller's meal. Gall threw him a loaf, and said to him, "In the name of Christ, withdraw from this valley; the neighboring mountains shall be common to us and thee, but on condition that thou shalt do no more harm either to man or beast." The next day the deacon went to fish in the torrent, and, as he threw his net, two demons appeared to him under the form of two naked women about to bathe, who threw stones at him, and accused him of having led into the desert the cruel man who had always overcome them. Gall, when he came, exorcised these phantoms; they fled, ascending the course of the torrent, and could be heard on the mountain, weeping and crying as with the voices of women. "Where shall we go? this stranger hunts us from the midst of men, and even from the depths of the desert;" while other voices asked, "whether the Christian was still there, and if he would not soon depart."[82]

Demons again.

These poetic traditions, transmitted from lip to lip among the first Christians of Helvetia, gave a natural picture of the effect produced upon the souls of the inhabitants by the double struggle of the Irish missionaries against the gods of paganism and the forces of nature. The entire life of the celebrated apostle of German Switzerland is thus taken possession of by legends, which have interwoven with it many tales, the charm of which detains us in spite of ourselves. One of these shows him to us appealed to by the same Duke

[82] Ozanam, *Etudes Germaniques*, ii. 123: Rettberg, *Kirchengeschichte*, ii. 40–43; *Vita S. Galli*, ap. Pertz, *Monumenta*, ii. 5. "Præcipio tibi, bestia, in nomine Domini. Tu induxisti virum istum in hunc eremum, virum iniquum et invidia plenum. . . . Præcipio vobis, phantasmata. . . . Heu! quid faciemus, aut quo pergemus?" — Walafrid. Strabo, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 224.

of Alamannia who wished to expel Columbanus and his companions out of his province, but who now claimed the help of the holy solitary whose fame already extended afar, to heal his daughter, possessed by a devil, who resisted all exorcisms, crying out that he would yield only to Gall, who had already banished him and his fellows from the banks of the Lakes of Zurich and Constance. Gall refused to go, and disappeared into the mountains of Rhætia; he was found there in a cavern, and led to the ducal castle at Uberlingen. He found the young princess lying, as if dead, upon the knees of her mother, her eyes shut, and her mouth open. He knelt down by her side, after a fervent prayer, commanded the demon to come out of her. The young girl opened her eyes, and the demon, speaking by her voice, said, before it obeyed him, "Art thou, then, that Gall who hast already chased me away everywhere? Ingrate! it is to avenge thee that I have entered into the daughter of thy persecutor, and thou comest now to expel me again!" When the cure was complete, Gall advised the daughter of the duke to consecrate her virginity to God, who had delivered her. But this princess, whose name was Friedeburga (castle of peace), and who was, like all princesses canonized by legends, of singular beauty, had been affianced to Sigebert, the eldest son of Thierry II., who had just succeeded his father, and was soon to perish under the sword of Clotaire II. She was sent to him to Metz. When he learned how and by whom she had been cured, the young prince made a gift and concession to the Irish saint of all the territory which he should desire in the public or royal possessions between the Rhætian Alps and the Lake of Constance. Then he wished to proceed with his marriage. Friedeburga asked some days' respite to recover her strength; she took advantage of this to flee to a church dedicated to St. Stephen. There she covered herself with a nun's veil, and, taking hold of the corner of the altar, prayed to the saint who had first shed his blood for Christ to help her. The young king, when he was told of this, came to the church with the nuptial robe and crown which had been intended for his bride. On seeing him, she held closer and closer to the altar. But he reassured her, and said, "I come here only to do thy will." He commanded the priests to bring her from the altar to him; when she approached, he had her clothed in the nuptial robe, and placed the crown over her veil. Then, after looking at

The Princess Friedeburga.

her for some time, he said to her, "Such as thou art there, adorned for my bridal, I yield thee to the bridegroom whom thou preferrest to me — to my Lord Jesus Christ." Then taking her hand, he placed her at the altar, and left the church, to mourn in secret over his lost love.[83]

Offered to God by her bridegroom.

However, the zealous solitary whose influence inspired from afar those touching and generous sacrifices, refused the bishopric of Constance, which the Duke of Alamannia would have conferred upon him, alleging as his reason the kind of interdict which his master had pronounced at the moment of separation, and returned into his dear solitude, which ten or twelve native Christians soon shared with him.[84] He selected one of these to send across the Alps to make inquiries concerning the fate of Columbanus, who brought back from Bobbio the news of his death, and the crosier of the illustrious exile, which he had bequeathed to his compatriot and friend as a sign of absolution. Ten years later, Gall received a deputation of six monks, Irish like himself, from Luxeuil, who came in the name of the community to pray his acceptance of the government of the great abbey, vacant by the death of Eustace. But he again refused to leave that asylum which he had formed for himself, and where he continued to preach and edify the surrounding population, receiving disciples and visitors in always increasing numbers, whom he supported by the produce of his fishing.

Origin of the abbey of St. Gall.

625.

Gall refuses to become abbot of Luxeuil.

[83] "Singulari pulchritudine fulgens. . . . In sinu matris, oculis clausis, ore inhianti. . . . Tu ne Gallus. . . . Ego plane ob ultionem injuriæ quam Dux iste tibi et sociis tuis irrogavit filiam ipsius invasi, et sic ejicis me. . . . Sicut mihi fuisti præparata cum ornamentis, sic te dabo ad sponsam Domino meo J. C. . . . Deinde ecclesiæ limen excedens lacrymis absconditum patefecit amorem. — Walafr. Strabo, c. 15–21. "Ob quod fertur egressus flere." — Anon. *VII. Sæc.* All these facts are also related in the anonymous life published by Pertz in the seventh century, and reproduced by the new Bollandists (t. vii. Octobris, p. 887), who maintain the authenticity of the essential part of this narration against the criticisms of most modern historians. Compare Mabillon, Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 42, and Rettberg, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, t. ii. p. 42. The most serious objection arises from the age of Sigebert, the eldest of the children, whom Columbanus had refused to bless, and who could scarcely be more than thirteen years old in 613, the year of the death of his father, Thierry, himself only twenty-six years of age. In an interesting letter, published by M. Dantier, in his *Rapport sur la Correspondance Inédite des Bénédictins* (1857, p. 198), Mabillon, while admitting the existence and high birth of Sigebert, disputes his being the son of Thierry and king of the Franks.

[84] "Reversurus ad dilectæ solitudinis aulam." — Wal. Strabo, c. 19.

He died. 16th October, 646.[85] When he died, the entire country of the Alamans had become a Christian province, and around his cell were already collected the rudiments of the great monastery which, under the same name of St. Gall, was to become one of the most celebrated schools of Christendom, and one of the principal centres of intellectual life in the Germanic world.

Several generations passed before St. Gall could accomplish its glorious destinies, whilst the principal foundation of Columbanus immediately attained the climax of its greatness and popularity. No monastery of the West had yet shone with so much lustre, or attracted so many disciples, as Luxeuil, since the exile of its illustrious founder fixed upon it the attention and sympathy of Christian Gaul. It may be remembered that, at the time of Columbanus's exile, none of his monks who were not Irish were allowed to follow him. One of these, named Eustace, born of a noble family in Burgundy, and who had been a soldier before entering Luxeuil, had to be torn from the arms of his spiritual father. After a time, he followed him to Bregenz, from whence he returned to Luxeuil to govern the community deprived of its natural head, and to dispute possession with the secular persons who invaded it on all sides, and who had even established their shepherds in the enclosure inhabited by the monks. Eustace was intrusted by Clotaire II., when he became sole master of the three Frank kingdoms, with the mission of recalling Columbanus, as we have already seen. Upon the refusal of the latter, Eustace remained at the head of the great abbey, which attracted an increasing number of monks, and the veneration of the nations. However, the missionary spirit and desire to preach exercised an overwhelming influence over Eustace as over all the disciples of the great Irish missionary. The bishops assembled in the Council of Bonneuil-sur-Marne by Clotaire II., nominated him to preach the faith to unconverted nations. He began with the Varasques, who inhabited, not far from Luxeuil, the banks of the Doubs, near Baume, some of whom were still idolaters, and worshipped the genii of the woods, the *fauns* and dryads of classic antiquity, whilst the others had fallen victims to heresy. He afterwards travelled beyond the countries which

Influence and prosperity of Luxeuil.

St. Eustace second abbot of Luxeuil. 610-625.

616.

His mission among the Varasques.

[85] This is the date given by Mabillon, and confirmed by Rettberg, ii. 46–48. The new Bollandists, p. 881, prefer that of 627.

Columbanus had visited, to the extremity of Northern Gaul, among the Boïens or Bavarians.[86] His mission was not without success; but Luxeuil, which could not remain thus without a head, soon recalled him.

And among the Boïens.

During the ten years of his rule, a worthy successor of Columbanus, he succeeded in securing the energetic support of the Frank nobility, as well as the favor of Clotaire II. under his active and intelligent administration, the abbey founded by St. Columbanus attained its highest point of splendor, and was recognized as the monastic capital of all the countries under Frank government. The other monasteries, into which laxness and the secular spirit had but too rapidly found their way, yielded one after another to the happy influence of Luxeuil, and gradually renewed themselves by its example.[87] Abbots animated by sincere zeal did not hesitate to draw from that new fountain the strength and light with which they found themselves unprovided in their ancient sanctuaries. Among them was Conon, the abbot of the famous monastery of Lerins, which had been, two centuries before, the most illustrious community of the West, but which had since come through all the vicissitudes of a slow decay.

Luxeuil became the monastic capital of the Gauls.

The great abbey of Sequania became thus a nursery of bishops and abbots — preachers and reformers for the whole Church of these vast countries, and principally for the two kingdoms of Austrasia and Burgundy. It owed this preponderating influence not only to the monastic regularity which was severely observed there, but especially to the flourishing

[86] "Warascos . . . qui agrestium fanis decepti, quos vulgi Faunos vocant." — *Vita S. Agili*, c. 9, ap. Act. SS. O. B., t. ii. p. 306. Compare Jonas, *Vita S. Eustasii; Vita S. Salabergæ;* Rettberg, t. ii. 188; and Niedermayer, *Das Moncthüm in Bajuwarien*, 1859, p. 41. This last author thinks himself entitled to affirm, on the authority of P. Meichelbeck, that St. Eustace adopted from that time the Benedictine rule. But Meichelbeck, in the only part of his works in which he treats this question (*Chronic. Benedicto-Buranum*, Proleg., p. 75, Monachii, 1751), gives no proof, nor any reason but the insufficient arguments of Mabillon. See above, page 589, note 72.

[87] "Properabat ad monasteria, maximeque Lussedium, quod erat eo tempore cunctis eminentius atque districtius. Neque enim tam crebra adhuc erant in Galliis monasteria: et sicubi essent, non sub regulari quidem disciplina, sed prorsus erant in malitia fermenti veteris sæcularia. Præter Lussedium ergo, quod solum, ut dictum est, districtionem regulæ solerter tenebat, Solemniacense monasterium in partibus occiduis hujus religionis extitet caput. Ex quo demum multi sumpserunt et initium et exemplum, adeo ut nunc quoque propitia divinitate, innumera per omnem Franciam et Galliam habeantur sub regulari disciplina, alma utriusque sexus cœnobia." — Audoenus, *Vita S. Eligii*, lib. i. c. 21. (He wrote from 660 to 680.)

And the first school of Christendom.

school established by Columbanus, which he had intrusted, while he remained there, to the special charge of Eustace, and whose progress the latter, when he himself became abbot, promoted with unwearied zeal. Luxeuil was the most celebrated school of Christendom during the seventh century, and the most frequented. The monks and clerks of other monasteries, and, more numerous still, the children of the noblest Frank and Burgundian races, crowded to it. Lyons, Autun, Langres, and Strasburg, the most famous cities of Gaul, sent their youth thither. The fathers came to study with their children; some aspiring to the honor of counting themselves one day among the sons of St. Columbanus; others to re-enter into secular life with the credit of having drawn their knowledge of divine and human learning from so famous a seat of learning. As it always happens, when a great centre of Christian virtues is formed in the world, light and life shine forth from it, and brighten all around with irresistible energy.[88]

Bishops and saints issued from Luxeuil.

From the banks of the Lake of Geneva to the coast of the North Sea, every year saw the rise of some monastery peopled and founded by the children of Luxeuil, whilst the episcopal cities sought as bishops men trained to the government of souls by the regenerating influence of this great monastery. Besançon, Noyon, Layon, Verdun, and the diocesan capitals of the country of the Rauraques and Morins, were so fortunate as to obtain such bishops almost at the same time. Their good fortune was envied by all, and all vied in seeking superiors whom they concluded beforehand to be saints.[89] And it was with reason;

[88] "Cum omnium Francorum honore fulciretur." — *Vita S. Eustasii*, c. 6. "Luxovium omnium caput Burgundiæ monasteriorum et Franciæ." — *Gallia Christian. Vet.*, ap. D. Pitra, 298. "Pene singulare tam in religionis apice quam in perfectione doctrinæ." — *Vita S. Frodoberti*, c. 5. Act. SS. O. B., t. ii. 601.

"Viri religiosi illuc undecumque confluunt, se suosque liberos plurimi certatim imbuendos offerunt, illud ante omnia ducentes per maximum, si post longævam probantis injuriæ tolerantiam quodammodo admitti mereantur in congregationem. Jam vero quis locus vel civitas non gaudeat ex beati viri Columbani disciplina rectorem habere, pontificem vel abbatem, cum constet ex hujus virtute magisterii pene totum Francorum orbem decretis regularibus fuisse primum decenter ornatum?" — Adson, *Vita S. Bercharii*, c. 6, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 800.

[89] We may mention, among the bishops whose names will not recur again, Hermenfried of Verdun, son of one of the principal lords of Alsatia, at one time a soldier and lieutenant of King Thierry of Burgundy. He was touched by grace in the middle of a battle, and became a monk under Columbanus about 605. He was taken from Luxeuil to be made bishop of Verdun about

for perhaps so great a number of men, honored by the Church after their death with public worship, has never been collected on one point, or into so short a space as twenty years.[90]

This remarkable prosperity was threatened with a sudden interruption by means of the intrigues of a false brother who had stolen into the monastic family of Columbanus. A man named Agrestin, who had been notary or secretary to King Thierry, the persecutor of Columbanus, came one day to give himself and all his property to Luxeuil. Being admitted among the monks, he soon showed a desire to go, like Eustace, to preach the faith to the pagans. In vain the abbot, who could see no evangelical quality in him, attempted to restrain that false zeal. He was obliged to let him go. Agrestin followed the footsteps of Eustace into Bavaria, but made nothing of it, and passed from thence into Istria and Lombardy, where he embraced the schism of the Three Chapters, which had already put Columbanus in danger of compromising himself with the Holy See. But the authority of the sovereign Pontiff had not been slow in exercising its legitimate influence upon the Italian disciples of the great Irish monk: and when Agrestin attempted to involve the second abbot of Bobbio, Attalus, in the schism, he was so badly received that he imagined himself entitled to address the successor of Columbanus in an epistle full of invectives and calumnies. He returned from thence to Luxeuil, where he tried to corrupt his former brethren. Eustace then remembered what the exiled Columbanus had written to them, in his letter from Nantes, just before his embarkation: "If there is one among you who holds different sentiments from the others, send him away;"[91] and he commanded Agrestin

Attempt of Agrestin against the institute of Columbanus.

609. Persecuted, like his spiritual master, by Brunehault, and sharing afterwards in all the misfortunes of his diocese, he died of grief, in 621, at sight of the calamities of his people.

[90] *Vie des Saintes de Franche-Comté*, by the professors of the College of St. François Xavier, tome ii. p. 492. The second volume of this excellent collection is exclusively devoted to the saints of Luxeuil, and it is the best work that can be read on this subject. We borrow from it the following enumeration of the saints sprung from the Abbey of Luxeuil alone: —

Columbanus.	Valery.	Donatus.
Columbanus the younger.	Waldolenus.	Attalus.
Desle.	Sigisbert.	Léobard.
Lua.	Eustace.	Bobolenus.
Gall.	Cagnoald.	Ursicin.
Ragnacarius.	Hermenfried.	Waldalenus.
Acharius.	Agilus.	Colombin.

[91] "Tantum inter vos non sit qui unum non sit . . . quicumque sint rebelles foras exeant." — *Epist. ad Fratres.*

to leave the community. To avenge himself, the schismatic began to snarl, says the contemporary annalist, hawking here and there injurious imputations against that same rule of St. Columbanus which he himself had professed, and the success of which could not fail to have excited some jealousy and hostility. One of the bishops, Abellinus of Geneva, listened to his denunciations, and exerted himself to make the neighboring prelates share his dislike. King Clotaire, who heard of it, and who was always full of solicitude for Luxeuil, assembled most of the bishops of the kingdom of Burgundy in council at Mâcon. To this council Eustace was called, and the accuser invited to state his complaints against the rule of Luxeuil. He says nothing of the celebration of Easter according to the Irish custom, which proves that Columbanus or his disciples had finally given up that assumption; nor were the severe penalties of the Penitentiary touched upon. All his complaints were directed against certain insignificant peculiarities, which he called superfluous, contrary to the canons, or showing a personal spirit. "I have discovered," said he, "that Columbanus has established usages which are not those of the whole Church." And thereupon he accused his former brethren, as with so many heresies, of making the sign of the cross upon their spoons, when eating; of asking a blessing in entering or leaving any monastic building; and of multiplying prayers at mass. He insisted especially against the Irish tonsure, which Columbanus had introduced into France, and which consisted solely in shaving the front of the head from one ear to the other, without touching the hair of the back part, while the Greeks shaved the entire head, and the Romans only the crown, leaving the hair in the form of a crown round the lower part of the head. This last custom, as is well known, became the prevalent one in all the religious orders of the West.[92]

Council of Mâcon. 624.

The Irish tonsure.

[92] "Se huc illucque vertit. . . . Canino dente garriens ac veluti cœnosa sus. . . . Ait superflua quædam et canonicæ institutioni aliena. . . . Cochleam quam lamberent crebro crucis signo signari. . . . Prorupit dicens se scire Columbanum a cæterorum more desciscere." — Jonas, *Vita S. Eustas.*, c. 9–10. The tonsure had been recognized, from apostolic times, as symbolical of the religious vow, as is proved by the sacred text relative to the Jew Aquila, who was Paul's host at Corinth: "Navigavit in Syriam et cum eo Priscilla et Aquila, qui *sibi totonderat* in Cenchris caput: habebat enim votum." — Act. xviii. 18. Some years after the Synod of Mâcon, the Council of Toledo, in 633, regulated the form of the tonsure, and of that circle of short hair round the head, called *corona clericalis*. It appears that the nuns were not always constrained to sacrifice their long hair, like the monks. This is shown in the curious anecdote related by Hildegaire, bishop of Meaux

Eustace had no difficulty in justifying the customs of Luxeuil, and in discomfiting the violence of his accuser. But as Agrestin always returned to the charge, the abbot said to him: "In presence of these bishops, I, the disciple and successor of him whose institute thou condemnest, cite thee to appear with him, within a year, at the tribunal of God, to plead thy cause against him, and to learn and know the justice of Him whose servant thou hast attempted to calumniate." The solemnity of this appeal had an effect even upon the prelates who leant to Agrestin's side: they urged him to be reconciled to his former abbot, and the latter, who was gentleness itself, consented to give him the kiss of peace. But this goodness did not benefit Agrestin. Hopeless of succeeding at Luxeuil itself, he sowed revolt and calumny in the other monasteries which had proceeded, like Luxeuil, from the colonizing genius of Columbanus, at Remiremont and Faremoutier. But, before the end of the year, he was slain with a blow of an axe by a slave, whose wife, it is believed, he had intended to dishonor.[93]

The bishops of the Council of Mâcon, and the Bishop of Geneva above all others, became from that time the champions and protectors of the institute of St. Columbanus. Like them, many other prelates of Gaul distinguished themselves by their eagerness in founding or protecting new monasteries destined to extend or practise the Irish rule. The glory of Columbanus and Luxeuil came forth uninjured, and indeed increased, from this trial. However, although no contemporary document expressly says as much, it is evident that from that time the heads of the institution perceived the necessity of softening the intense individuality of their founder's spirit. Through the passionate and exaggerated accusations of Agrestin, their eyes were opened to the dangers of isolation, even in what were apparently unimportant details of observance and regular discipline. They perceived, with profound Christian sagacity, that they must give up the thought of extending the Rule of

in the ninth century, in the life of his predecessor, St. Faron. The holy bishop, wishing to see his wife again, from whom he had been obliged to separate in order to become a bishop, and who lived as a nun in a villa of his patrimony, she, for fear of exciting a culpable regret in the mind of her husband, "se totondit totam cæsariem capitis, in quo consistebat ornamentum pulchrius corporis." The precaution succeeded so well, that Faron, seeing her thus shaven, "amarissimo tædio exhorruit." — Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 592.

[93] Jonas, c. 12–16.

their master everywhere, and as the only monastic code. They knew that by their side a Rule more ancient than their own, and fortified by the formal approbation of the Roman Pontiff, lived and flourished; without brilliant success it is true, up to that time, but not without fruit or honor. By what means was the Abbey of Luxeuil brought into contact with the Rule of St. Benedict? By what argument did this powerful and celebrated house open her doors to another glory and authority than that of her founder? There is no answer to this question:[94] but it is certain that, under the successor of Eustace, who died a year after the Council of Mâcon, and after that time, in the numerous foundations of which we have still to speak, the two Rules almost always appear together, as the joint bases of communities originated by the disciples of Columbanus.[95] The monastic republic of Gaul, which apparently ought to have recognized only one dictator, henceforth was to have two consuls, like the Roman republic of old.

The Benedictine Rule is associated with the institute of Columbanus.

The successor of Eustace was Walbert, also a pupil and companion of Columbanus. Born of Sicambrian race, of a noble and wealthy family, he had been remarked for his bravery in war, before he enrolled himself in the army of the Irish missionary. But the attraction of the cloister overcome the warlike inclinations of the Frank. When his mind was made up, he went to Luxeuil, taking with him not only a gift of all his vast domains, but also his military dress, of which he would only divest himself in the monastery itself: he offered also the arms with which he had won his fame, which were suspended from the arches of the church, and remained there during the course of ages, as a monument of the noblest vic-

The soldier Walbert becomes the third abbot of Luxeuil.

625-665.

[94] There is nothing to authorize the account of Orderic Vital, who, five centuries subsequent to the foundation of Luxeuil, asserts that St. Maur — who died in 584 — was known by the disciples of St. Columbanus, who died in 615; but it will gratify our readers to quote here a passage from that historian, who thus explains the effect produced on monastic posterity by the fusion of the two institutions: — "Ipsi (the disciples of Columbanus) reor, B. Maurum ejusque socios et discipulos noverunt, utpote vicini, et ab ipsis sicut ab aliis scripta doctorum, ædificationis causa, *sancti normam susceperе Benedicti, ita tamen ut non abhorrerent sui statuta magistri*, almi videlicet Columbani. Ab *ipso* siquidem modum divinæ servitutis et ordinem didicerunt, et formam orationum; . . . *nigredinem vestium* aliasque observationes sumpserunt quas pro religione et honestate ipsius tenuerunt, et *sequaces* eorum *usque in hodiernum* reverenter observare appetunt." — Orderic Vital, *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. viii. c. 27.

[95] Mabillon, *Præf. in II. Sæc.*, c. 15; *Præf. in IV. Sæc.*, c. 126, 127.

tory which a man can achieve here below.[96] He obtained permission from Eustace to live alone in the hollow of a rock, near a fountain in the midst of the wood, three miles from the abbey. It was here that, after the death of Columbanus's first successor Eustace, and the refusal of Gall to accept the office, the monks of Luxeuil sought Walbert to make him their third abbot. He ruled them for forty years with honor and success. We shall see hereafter the sympathy which existed between Walbert and Bathild, the holy regent of the three Frank kingdoms, and the power he was supposed to have over her. His name remains, in the surrounding countries, the most popular of all those who have done honor to the great abbey of Sequania. He maintained discipline and encouraged profound study, while he increased the property of the community, by his own donations in the first place, and then by those which the reputation of the monastery attracted from all sides. 625-665.

To the temporal independence thus secured, was soon added a sort of spiritual independence eagerly sought by all the great monasteries, and which they spared no pains in soliciting either from the popes or provincial councils. Their object was to protect themselves, by a solemn privilege, from the vexatious abuses of authority, which the diocesan bishop, by right of his spiritual authority, could subject them to, by taking up his abode among them against their will, with a numerous retinue, by making them pay a very high price for the holy chrism and the ordination of their brethren, or, above all, by obstructing the freedom of their elections. Lerins had obtained this privilege from the Council of Arles in 451, and Agaune from the Council of Chalon in 579. Luxeuil could not fail to feel the importance of the same rights and the same necessities.

Under the abbacy of Walbert, and upon a petition made in the name of King Clovis II., then a minor, Pope John IV. accorded the privilege of exemption from episcopal authority "to the monastery of St. Peter, founded," says the pontifical act, "by Exemption accorded by Pope John IV. 641.

[96] "Vir egregius ex genere Sicambrorum." — *Vita S. German. Grandiv.*, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 491. "Cujus annos adolescentiæ in armis tradunt excellentissime floruisse . . . inclyta prosapia clarissimus . . . hominibus et rerum dignitate juxta natales suos distissimus . . . miles optimus inter fasces constitutus et arma . . . armisque depositis quæ usque hodie (in the time of Adson, about 950) in testimonium sacræ militiæ ejus in eo loco habentur." — Act. SS. O. S. B., t. iv. p. 411. The hermitage in which St. Walbert passed the first years of his conversion is still to be seen at some distance from Luxeuil. He died in 665.

the venerable Columbanus, a Scot, who came a stranger, but fervent in zeal and sanctity in the kingdom of the Franks. . . . If, which God forbid, the monks of the said monastery should become lukewarm in the love of God and observance of the institutes of their father, they shall be punished by the abbot, that is, by the father of the monastery; and if he himself should fall into indifference, and contempt of the paternal rule, the Holy See shall provide for that." [97]

Extension of the institution of Luxeuil under Walbert.

Six hundred monks formed, under the cross of Walbert, the permanent garrison of this monastic citadel, from whence missionaries, solitary or in parties, issued daily to found new monastic colonies at a distance. There even came a time when the throng of monks seeking entrance seems to have embarrassed Walbert, and when he sought means of placing them elsewhere and at a distance. For under him, even more than under his predecessors, the productiveness of Luxeuil became prodigious. It was at this period particularly, as says a contemporary, that, throughout the whole of Gaul, in the castles and cities, in plains and in deserts, armies of monks and colonies of nuns abounded everywhere, carrying with them the glory and the laws of Benedict and Columbanus.[98]

[97] Mabilion found a fragment of the text of this bull in the archives of Montierender: he has completed it from the diplomas of the subsequent popes, and published it in his *Annal. Bened.*, t. xiii. No. 11, and *Append.*, No. 18. The bull of John IV. has been disputed by Brequigny, in his *Diplomata, Chartæ*, &c., 1791, folio, p. 186–188. Admitting that it may be interpolated, it is certain that the exemption granted to Luxeuil was, in fact, neither less solemn nor less extensive than those of Lerins and Agaune. It is instanced in the same terms in the *Formulas* of Marculph relative to exemptions (book 1, tit. i.), and in all the privileges granted in the seventh century, such as those of St. Denys, Corbie, &c. Mabillon himself admits that the bull of Pope John IV. can only be a confirmation of previous exemptions, and this is the most probable supposition, seeing that mention had been already made of the privilege of Luxeuil in the charter granted to Rebais by Dagobert I. in 634. We may be permitted to decline any discussion of the document, entirely foreign to the question, by which a lamented and distinguished, but paradoxical writer, the Count Alexis de Saint-Priest, in his *Histoire de la Royauté*, t. ii. p. 157, supposed himself able to prove his theory of the imaginary opposition between Rome and Luxeuil.

[98] "Cernens . . . Waldebertus certatim undique catervas monachorum coadunari, cœpit de tam plurima multitudine si forte ubi ubi posset loca uberrima ubi de suis monachis ad habitandum adunare exquirere." — *Vita S. Germ. Grandiv.*, c. 8. "Walberti tempore per Galliarum provincias agmina monachorum et sacrarum virginum examina non solum per agros, villas, vicosque atque castella, verum etiam per eremi vastitatem ex regula duntaxat Benedicti et Columbani pullulare cœperunt, cum ante illud tempus vix pauca illis reperirentur locis." — *Vita S. Salabergæ*, ap. Act. SS. Ord. Bened., sæc. ii. t. ii. p. 407.

Colonies of Luxeuil in Gaul.

It would be a hard task to trace the faithful picture of that monastic colonization of Gaul, which had, during the whole of the seventh century, its centre in Luxeuil. A single glance must suffice here. To find our way through this labyrinth, it is necessary to survey rapidly the principal provinces which received, one after another, the benefits of this pacific conquest. This rapid course will permit us to breathe the perfume of some of those flowers of exquisite charity and sweet humbleness, which blossomed amid the savage violence and brutal cruelty of which Christendom was then the theatre. It will show us also how many obstacles and dangers these men of peace and prayer had to surmount, and how, subdued under the yoke of the monastic rule, in solitude or in the community of the cloister, the Franks who gave themselves to God under the laws of Columbanus or Benedict, allowed neither the generous courage nor the proud independence of their fathers to degenerate in them; how they displayed, above all, in every encounter, that individual energy and initiative force which was characteristic of the Germanic races, and which alone could regenerate the West, so long sunk under the ignoble burden of Roman decrepitude.

And first in the two Burgundies.

But before studying the action of Columbanus and his followers upon the Frank and Burgundian nobility at a distance, we find, not far from Luxeuil, a great foundation due to one of those Irish monks who were the faithful companions of him who, four centuries after his death, was still called "the king of monks and conductor of the chariot of God." It will be recollected that, at his expulsion from Luxeuil, the Irish monks alone were permitted to follow him. One of them, then advanced in years, and believed to have been a brother of St. Gall, whose Celtic name has disappeared under the Latin appellation of Deicolus or Desle (servant of God), when he had reached with Columbanus a place covered with brushwood, some miles distant from Luxeuil, upon the road to Besançon, felt his limbs fail, and perceived that he could go no farther. Throwing himself at the feet of his abbot, he asked and obtained permission, with the blessing of Columbanus, to accomplish his pilgrimage in this desert. After a tearful separation, when he found himself alone, he set out to find a place of rest in the forest. Searching through the thicket, he met a flock of swine, the herdsman of which was thunderstruck at sight of this stranger of

The old Irish monk Deicolus, founder of Lure.

613-625.

great height, and clad in a costume unknown to him. "Who are you?" asked the swineherd, "whence come you? what seek you? what are you doing in this wild country without guide or companion?" "Be not afraid, my brother," said the old Irishman, "I am a traveller and a monk; and I beg you for charity to show me hereabouts a place where a man may live." The swineherd answered him, that in this neighborhood the only place he knew was marshy, but still habitable, because of the abundance of water, and belonged to a powerful vassal called Werfair. He refused, however, to guide him to it, lest his flock should stray in his absence; but Desle insisted, and said, with that daring gayety which we still find among the Irish, "If thou do me this little favor, I answer for it that thou shalt not lose the very least of thy herd; my staff shall replace thee, and be swineherd in thy absence." And thereupon he stuck his traveller's staff into the ground, round which the swine collected and lay down; upon which the two set out through the wood, the Irish monk and the Burgundian swineherd, and thus was discovered and taken possession of the site of the existing town of Lure, and of that great monastery of the same name, the abbot of which, eleven centuries after this adventure, was reckoned among the princes of the holy Roman empire.[99]

But Desle was not at the end of his difficulties. Near his new retreat was a little church, frequented by the shepherds and peasants of the neighborhood, and served by a secular priest, who saw the arrival of the disciple of Columbanus in these regions with an evil eye: "This monk," he said, "will interfere with my living." And he told his hearers that this stranger was a magician, who hid himself in the wood that he might give himself up to his incantations, "and that he had come at midnight, under pretence of praying, to my chapel, the doors of which I had closed in vain: a single word from him sufficed to open them." The priest afterwards denounced him to Werfair, the lord of the place, asking him if he was disposed to allow a certain foreign monk to take possession of his chapel, without any one being able to put him out of it. With that brutal ferocity which constantly reappeared among these baptized barbarians, Werfair commanded that the stranger should be seized if possible, and that the punishment of castration should be inflicted on him. But before that impious order could be obeyed, he was him-

[99] See the article "Chapitres Nobles de Lure et de Murbach Réunis," in the *France Ecclésiastique* for the year 1788, p. 78.

self suddenly seized with shameful and mortal sickness. His pious widow, in the hope of softening divine justice towards the soul of her husband, made a gift of all the land which surrounded the site of Lure to the monk who called himself the traveller of Christ, and numerous disciples soon came to live by his side a life of peace and prayer. Their pious solitude was one day disturbed, as has been already mentioned, by King Clotaire II., whose name perpetually recurs in the history of Columbanus and his disciples. As the king was one day hunting in a royal domain near Lure, a boar, pursued by the nobles of his train, took refuge in the cell of Desle. The saint laid his hand upon its head, saying, "Since thou comest to ask charity, thy life shall be saved." The king, when told of it by the hunters who had followed the animal, desired to see that wonder for himself. When he knew that the old recluse was a disciple of that Columbanus whom he had always honored and protected, he inquired affectionately what means of subsistence the abbot and his companions could find in that solitude. "It is written," said the Irishman, "that nothing shall be wanting to those who fear God; we lead a poor life, but with the fear of God it suffices for us." Clotaire bestowed upon the new community all the forests, pasturage, and fisheries possessed by the public treasury in the neighborhood of Lure, which became from that time, and always remained, one of the richest monasteries in Christendom.[100]

Lure and Luxeuil were situated in the north of ancient Sequania, then included in the kingdom of Burgundy, of

[100] "Cum monarches atque auriga Dei Columbanus. . . . Pedibus vehementer debilitari cœpit. . . . Bubulcus videns tam proceræ staturæ virum et antea invisi habitus veste circumdatum. . . . Ne paveas, frater: peregrinus ego sum; monachicum propositum gero. . . . Fustem meum constituo custodem vicarium. . . . Heu mihi! propter unum monachum jam hic vivere non possum. . . . Latitat quidam in hac silvula monachus quidam peregrinus, qui nescio quibus incantationibus utitur. . . . Placet tibi ut monachus quidam capellulam tuam sibi vindicet. . . . Idem membrum quod famulo Dei præcidi jussit mox illi in tumorem versum est. . . . Peregrinus sum pro Christo. . . . Curtem fiscumque regalem. . . . Crede mihi, quia ad charitatem confugisti, hodie vita non privaberis. . . . Rex subjunxit: Et unde, pater venerande, vivis, vel hi qui tecum sunt? . . . Pauperem vitam gerimus." — Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. pp. 95–99. This legend, written in the tenth century, and which contains very curious details of the spoliations to which the abbey was subjected under the last Carlovingians, adds that, before his death, Desle went to Rome to seek a privilege from the Holy See to oppose the rapacity of the Burgundians in the neighborhood of his foundation, whose usurpations he feared, although admitting their liberality. But the mention made in this privilege of a Roman emperor in the seventh century sufficiently proves its falsehood.

which, as well as Austrasia, Clotaire II. had become the master. The whole of that wide and beautiful district of Burgundy which retains its name, and which, to the west and east of the river Saone, has since formed the duchy, and particularly the county of Burgundy, was naturally the first to yield to the influence of Luxeuil. This district was, from the time of Columbanus, governed, or rather possessed, by a powerful family of Burgonde origin, whose connection with Columbanus and his disciples demonstrated once more the powerful influence exercised upon the Frank nobility by the great Irish monk. This house was represented by two brothers, who both bore the title of duke: the one, Amalgar, was duke of Burgundy to the west and north of the Doubs; the other, Waldelen or Wandelin, lived at Besançon, and his duchy extended to the other side of Jura, as far as the Alps.[101] Waldelen and his wife suffered much from having no children to whom to leave their immense possessions. The renown of the first miracles and great sanctity of the Irish monk, who had established himself not far from Besançon, drew them to Luxeuil. They went to ask him to pray for them, and to obtain them a son from the Lord. "I will do it willingly," said the saint; "and I will ask not only one, but several, on condition that you give me the first-born, that I may baptize him with my own hands, and dedicate him to the Lord." The promise was made, and the mercy obtained. The duchess herself carried her first-born to Luxeuil, where Columbanus baptized him, giving him the name of Donat (*Donatus*) in testimony of the gift which his parents had made of him to God. He was restored to his mother to be nursed, and then brought back to be trained in the monastery, where the child grew up, and remained until, thirty years after, he was taken from it to be made bishop of Besançon. In that metropolitan city, where the exile of

The ducal family of St. Donatus and its foundations.

621.

[101] The following table appears indispensable to explain the narrative: —

I. N., Burgundian noble.

II. WALDELEN, duke at Besançon, married FLAVIA, from whom —		II. AMALGAIRE, duke in Burgundy, married AQUILINE, from whom —		
III. DONATUS, bishop of Besançon, founder of St. Paul and of Jussamoutier. † 660.	III. RAMALEN, duke after his father, restorer of Romain-Moutier.	III. ADALRIC, duke after his father.	III. WALDALEN, first abbot of Beze. † about 680.	III. ADALSIND, abbess of Bregille.

Columbanus had doubtless left popular recollections, Donatus, out of love for his spiritual father, established a monastery of men under the rule of Columbanus, and dedicated to St. Paul, as Luxeuil was to St. Peter. He added, however, to the observance of the rule of the founder of Luxeuil, that of the rule of St. Benedict, which was introduced about the same period at Luxeuil itself. He himself lived there as a monk, always wearing the monastic dress. Afterwards, with the help of his mother, and also in his episcopal city of Besançon, he originated the monastery of Jussamoutier for nuns, giving them a rule in which that of St. Cæsarius, which we have already seen adopted by Radigund at Poitiers, was combined with various arrangements borrowed from the rules of Columbanus and Benedict.[102] The Latin of the preamble, which was written by Donatus himself, does honor to the school of Luxeuil. The daughters of Jussamoutier rivalled the monks of Luxeuil in zeal and fervor, but they asked expressly that the laws of *the two patriarchs* should be modified so as to suit the difference of sex. They do not seem, however, to have objected to any of the severities of Irish tradition, for we see with surprise in that version of the three rules adapted to their use, the penalty of fifty or even a hundred lashes inflicted upon these virgins for certain faults against discipline. The wiser and gentler rule of Benedict gained ground, notwithstanding, at each new manifestation of religious life.

St. Paul of Besançon.

Jussamoutier.

The younger brother of Donatus, Ramelen, who succeeded his father as Duke of Transjuran Burgundy, signalized his reverence for the memory of Columbanus by the foundation or reconstruction of the abbey of Romain-Moutier, in a pass on the southern side of Jura, consecrated to prayer, two centuries before, by the founder of Condat.[103] He introduced a colony from Luxeuil there: the ancient church, often rebuilt, exists still: it

Re-establishment of Romain-Moutier. 646.

[102] "Utrique erant ex nobili Burgundiorum prosapia." — *Ancient Breviary of Besançon, printed in* 1489. "Matri ud nutriendum reddit. Qui post alitur in eodem monasterio. . . . Nunc usque superest eamdem cathedram regens. . . . Pro amore B. Columbani ex ipsius Regula monasterium virorum construxit." — Jonas, *Vita S. Colomb.*, c. 22. Holstein, *Codex Regularum.* Compare Mabillon, *Præf. in IV. Sæc.*, § 125, and the *Vies des Saints de Franche-Comté*, vol. i. p. 186, and *Appendix*, n. 6, 7, and 8. Of the ancient abbey of St. Paul, at Besançon, there remain only some fragments of the church, which have been transferred to the court of the library. The abbey of Jussamoutier is now a barrack for gens-d'armes.

[103] See before, p. 288. "Pro amore beati viri Columbani." — Jonas, c. 22.

has served as a model to an entire order of primitive churches, and the basis of an ingenious and new system, which characterizes the date and style of the principal Christian monuments between Jura and the Alps.[104]

Abbey of Bèze.

We have said that the father of St. Donatus had a brother, another lord, Amalgaire, whose duchy extended to the gates of Besançon. This last had two children, who, like their cousins, are connected with Luxeuil. The son named Waldelen, like his uncle, was also intrusted to the care of Columbanus, and became a monk at Luxeuil, from whence his father took him to put him at the head of

630. the abbey of Bèze, which he had founded in honor of God, St. Peter, and St. Paul, between the Saône and the Tille, near a fountain still known and admired for the immense sheet of water which gushes from it, and to the east of a forest called the *Velvet Forest*, a name which preserves to our own days a trace of the impression produced by its thick verdure upon the admiring popular mind, at a time when the common mind seems to have been more observant than now of certain beauties. The new abbot carried the rule of Columbanus to Bèze, and maintained it for fifty years in that sanctuary, which was long to hold its place in the first rank of French monasteries. When his eldest brother, who had succeeded to the duchy of his father, compromised in the civil wars of the time of Ebroïn, had to flee into Austrasia,

676. Waldelen collected his property and joined it to that of the monastery. He offered an asylum there to his sister, Adalsind, for whom their father, Duke Amalgar, had

Bregille, near Besançon.

also founded an abbey at Bregille, opposite Besançon on the right bank of the Doubs. But she could not long remain there; the annoyances she met with from the inhabitants of the surrounding country

656. obliged her to leave a place in which neither the ancient authority of her father, nor her character of abbess, nor the proximity of an important city governed by her fam-

[104] *Histoire de l'Architecture Sacrée du* IV^e^ *au* X^e^ *Siècle dans les Anciens Evêchés de Genève, Lausanne et Sion*, by J. D. Blavignac, 1853. This church was certainly built in the eighth century, when Pope Stephen II. consecrated it in 753, and commanded the abbey, where he had lived for some time, to be called *the Roman Monastery*, playing upon the name which it already bore in honor of its first founder, St. Romain of Condat. It became in the tenth century a priory of Cluny. Compare the *Vies des Saints de Franche-Comté*, vol. i. p. 598, vol. iii. p. 27, and the cartulary of Romain-Moutier, published by the learned Baron de Gingins, in vol. xiv. of the *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire de la Suisse Romande.*

ily, could protect her. This forced exile is a proof, among many others, of the obstacles and hostilities too often encountered by the Religious of both sexes, despite the protection of kings and nobles, amid the unsubdued races who had invaded the West.[105]

Ermenfried, at Cusance. 625-670.

While the various members of the most powerful family of the two Burgundies testified thus their devotion to the memory and institute of Columbanus, the young and noble Ermenfried obeyed the same impulse upon a more modest scale, amid the half-pagan tribe of the Varasques, who, following the Burgonde invasion from the banks of the Rhine, occupied, a little above Besançon, a district watered by the Doubs, where the second abbot of Luxeuil, Eustace, had already attempted their conversion. Ermenfried, according to the custom of the Germanic races, had been *recommended* in his youth, along with his brother, to King Clotaire II., the friend and protector of Columbanus, who had received him into his house. His noble bearing, his varied knowledge, and modest piety, gained him the favor of this prince. Clotaire had, besides, intrusted his brother with the care of the ring which was his seal-royal, and had thus constituted him chancellor of his court. Ermenfried, recalled into his own country to receive the inheritance of a wealthy noble of his family, had found, in surveying his new possessions, a narrow little valley where two clear streams, uniting at the foot of a little hill, formed into a tributary of the Doubs, called the Cusancin, and where there had formerly existed, under the name of Cusance, a monastery of women. Contemplating this site, he was filled with a desire to raise the ruins of the abandoned sanctuary, and to consecrate himself there to the Lord. When he returned to the court of Clotaire, the new spirit which animated him soon became apparent. One day, when he appeared before the king with his silken tunic in disorder and falling to his feet, Clotaire said to him, "What is the matter, Ermanfried? What is this fashion of wearing thy tunic? Wouldst thou really become a clerk?" "Yes," answered the Varasque, "a clerk, and even a monk; and I entreat you to grant me your permission." The king consented, and the two brothers immediately set out for their solitude. In vain their mother urged them to marry and perpetuate their race. Ermenfried went to Luxeuil to be trained for monastic life under Wal-

[105] *Chronicon Besuense*, ap. D'Achery, *Spicilegium*, vol. ii. p. 402.

bert, received there the monastic frock and the priesthood, and returned to Cusance, where he soon became the head of a community of thirty monks, which he subordinated completely to Luxeuil, and directed with gentle and active authority, while his brother, with whom he always lived in the closest union, provided for their temporal necessities. Ermenfried reserved the humbler labors for himself; he spent whole days in sifting the grain which the others thrashed in the barn. For he loved work and workers. On Sundays, in celebrating mass, he distributed to the people the *eulogies* or unconsecrated wafers, which then served for consecrated bread. When he perceived the hard hands of the ploughmen, he bent down to kiss with tender respect these noble marks of the week's labor. I have surveyed the annals of all nations, ancient and modern, but I have found nothing which has moved me more, or better explained the true causes of the victory of Christianity over the ancient world, than the image of this German, this son of the victors of Rome and conquerors of Gaul, become a monk, and kissing, before the altar of Christ, the hard hand of the Gaulish husbandmen, in that forgotten corner of Jura, without even suspecting that an obscure witness took note of it for forgetful posterity.[106]

He kisses the hands of the ploughmen.

Before we leave Sequania, let us ascend into the country of the Rauraques (the ancient bishopric of Bâle). There, on the banks of that deep and narrow gorge, hollowed by the Doubs in the very heart of the Jura, upon the existing boundary of Switzerland and Franche-Comté, at the spot where that river, having run since its source from south to north, makes a sudden turn towards the west, before doubling back to the south, and forms thus a sort of peninsula still called *the close of the Doubs*, we shall find the little town of St. Ursanne. It originated in the choice which another disciple of Columbanus made of that wild country in order to live there in solitude. Ursicinus, which has been transformed into Ur-

Colonies of Luxeuil in Rauracia.

St. Ursanne.

[106] "Dives valde ac potentior cæteris. . . . Adulti traduntur ad palatium Clotario regi servituri. . . . Qui tradidit ei annulum suum, factusque est cancellarius in toto palatio. . . . Sinebat tunicam quod Sericam vocabant, usque ad medias dependere tibias. . . . Quid est hoc, Ermenfrede? cur tunicam tuam fers taliter? Numquid clericus esse vis? . . . Et clericum me monachumque fieri opto. . . . Si vidisset aliquem operatorem aut pauperrimum crepatis manibus, non ante eulogias dabat quam . . . manus ipsas oscularetur." — EGILBERTUS, *Vita S. Ermenf.*, ap. BOLLAND, t. vii. Septemb., p. 120.

sanne, was probably Irish, since he left Luxeuil with Columbanus; but, like Gall and Sigisbert, he did not follow him into Italy; and, after having founded a little Christendom upon the fertile shores of the Lake of Bienne, he perferred to establish himself among the scarped rocks covered with firs which overlook the upper course of the Doubs. Climbing into the most inaccessible corners of these wild gorges, in search of their strayed cattle, the herdsmen one day discovered him, and told, on descending, that they had found at the top of the mountain a wan and emaciated man, like another St. John Baptist, who most surely lived in community with the bears, and was supported by them. Thence, doubtless, arose the name of Ursicinus or Urson, which has replaced this monk's Celtic name. In this instance, as invariably through the annals of monastic extension, the great examples of mortification and spiritual courage, which excited the admiration and sympathy of some, raised the derision and hostility of others. A rich inhabitant of the neighborhood drew the solitary to his house on pretence of hearing him preach; and having made him drink wine, to which he was not accustomed, the poor saint soon became uncomfortable and asked leave to withdraw. Then the perfidious host, with all his family, began to mock the monk with bursts of laughter, calling him glutton, drunkard, and hypocrite, and accusing him as such to the surrounding population. Urson cursed the house of the traitor, and returned to his solitude. This adventure brought no discredit upon him: far from that, he had many disciples, and the increasing number of those who would live like him, and with him, obliged him to leave the huts which he had raised upon the heights, and to build his convent at the bottom of the pass and on the bank of the river. It is to be remarked that he had here a hospital for the sick poor, and kept baggage-cattle to bring them from a distance and through the steep paths of these mountains.[107]

The little monastery which our Irishman had founded was taken up and occupied after his death by another colony

[107] "Velut alterum in deserto Joannem. . . . Traditio est ursum super divi speluncam radices et herbas attulisse. . . . Ut vino, cui minime assueverat, victus ludibrio exponatur. . . . Crebro repetitis poculis urget. . . . Gulæ et Bacchi voraginem . . . exsibilandum propinare." — *Compendium Vitæ S. Ursicini*, ap. TROUILLAT, *Monuments de l'Ancien Evêché de Bâle*, Porentruy, 1852, t. i. p. 42.

St. Germain de Grandval. 618-670.

from Luxeuil, led by Germain, a young noble of Treves, who, at seventeen, in spite of king and bishop, had left all to flee into solitude. He was of the number of those recruits whose coming to enroll themselves at Luxeuil alarmed Abbot Walbert by their multitude. The latter, recognizing the piety and ability of the young neophyte, intrusted to him the direction of the monks whom he sent into a valley of Raurasia, of which Gondoin, the first known duke of Alsatia, had just made him a gift. This valley, though fertile and well watered, was almost unapproachable: Germain, either by a miracle, or by labors in which he himself took the principal share, had to open a passage through the rocks which formed the approach of the defile. The valley took the name of Moustier-Grandval, after the monastery, which he long ruled, in conjunction with that of St. Ursanne. The abbot of Luxeuil, with the consent of his brethren, had expressly freed the monks whom he intended, under the authority of Germain, to people the new sanctuary, from all obedience to himself. In the surrounding country, the benevolent stranger, who died a victim to his zeal for his neighbor, was everywhere beloved. A new duke of Alsatia, Adalric, set himself to oppress the population, and to trouble the monks of Grandval in every possible way, treating them as rebels to the authority of his predecessor and to his own. He approached the monastery at the head of a band of Alamans, who were as much robbers as soldiers. Germain, accompanied by the librarian of the community, went to meet the enemy. At the sight of the burning houses, and of his poor neighbors pursued and slaughtered by the soldiers, he burst forth into tears and reproaches. "Enemy of God and truth," he said to the duke, "is it thus that you treat a Christian country? and do you not fear to ruin this monastery which I have myself built?" The duke listened without anger, and promised him peace. But as the abbot returned to Grandval, he met some soldiers upon his way to whom he addressed similar remonstrances: "Dear sons, do not commit so many crimes against the people of God!" Instead of appeasing, his words exasperated them; they divested him of his robes, and slew him as well as his companion.[108]

[108] "Ex genere senatorum natus. . . . Locum uberrimum, infra saxorum concava. . . . Cernens abbas quod difficilis esset introitus eorum, cœpit saxorum dura manibus quatere, et valvæ utraque parte vallis patuerunt et sunt intrantibus patefactæ usque in hodiernum diem. . . . Inimice Dei et verita-

The body of this martyr of justice and charity was carried to the church which he had built at St. Ursanne. In the interval between the death of the founder of the abbey, and that of the first martyr of the illustrious line of Columbanus, this remote monastery had already felt the influence of a third saint, who, without passing through Luxeuil, had nevertheless yielded to the power of Columbanus's genius and rule.

The Count Vandregisil. — 600-670.

Vandregisil was born near Verdun, of noble and rich parents, allied to the two Mayors of the Palace, Erchinoald and Pepin of Landen, who governed Neustria and Austrasia under the authority of King Dagobert I., son and successor of that Clotaire II. who had been always so favorable to Columbanus and his disciples. This relationship had procured the young noble a favorable position in the court of the king, to whom he had been recommended in his youth. He became Count of the Palace, that is to say, judge of the causes referred to the king, and collector of the returns of the royal revenue. But power and ambition held no place in a heart which had already felt the contagion of the many great examples furnished by the Frank nobility. Refusing a marriage which his parents had arranged, he went to take refuge with a solitary upon the banks of the Meuse. Now the Merovingian kings had then interdicted the Frank nobles from taking the clerical or monastic habit without their permission, an interdict founded upon the military service due to the prince, which was the soul of the social organization of the Germanic races. Dagobert therefore saw with great displeasure that a Frank, brought up in the royal court, and invested with a public charge, had thus fled, without the consent of his sovereign, from the duties of his rank. He ordered him to return. As Vandregisil very reluctantly approached the palace, he saw a poor man who had been thrown from his cart into the mud before the king's gates. The passers-by took no notice of him, and several even trampled on his body. The count of the palace immediately alighted from his horse, extended his hand to the poor driver, and the two together raised up the cart. Afterwards he went to Dagobert, amid the derisive

tis, ingressus es super homines Christianos! . . . Per totam vallem cernens tanquam a luporum morsibus vicinos laniari et domus eorum incendio concremari, flevit diutissime. . . . Nolite, filii mei, tantum nefas perpetrare in populo Dei." — Boboleni, *Vita S. Germani*, ap. Trouillat, *Monuments de l'Evêché de Bâle*, t. i. p. 49–53, who has given a much more complete version of it than that of the *Acta* of Mabillon.

shouts of the spectators, with his dress stained with mud; but it appeared resplendent with the light of charity in the eyes of the king, who, touched by his humble self-devotion, permitted him to follow his vocation, and forbade any one to interfere with him.[109]

When he was freed from this anxiety, Vandregisil went to the tomb of St. Ursanne, which was situated on an estate belonging to his house, with which he enriched the monastery. He applied himself there by excessive austerities to the subdual of his flesh; struggling, for example, against the temptations of his youth, by plunging during the winter into the snow, or the frozen waters of the Doubs, and remaining there whilst he sang the psalms.[110] Here also he found the trace of Columbanus's example and instructions, which led him from the side of Jura across the Alps to Bobbio, where he admired the fervor of the disciples whom the great Irish missionary had left there. It was there, doubtless, that he conceived so great an admiration for the memory and observances of Columbanus, that he determined on going to Ireland to seek in the country of the founder of Luxeuil and Bobbio, the secrets of penitential life and the narrow way. But God, says one of his biographers, reserved him for the Gauls. After another long sojourn in Romain-Moutier, which had just been restored under the influence of the spirit of Columbanus, he went to Rouen, where Ouën, a holy and celebrated bishop, who had known him at the court of Dagobert, and whose youth had also felt the influence, so fertile even after his death, of Columbanus, then presided. The metropolitan of Rouen would not permit a man distinguished at once by his tried virtue and illustrious birth, to steal out of sight. It is thus that the biographer of St. Germain describes to us how the abbot of Luxeuil had long sought a monk who was at once learned, holy, and of noble extraction,

[109] "Comes constituitur palatii. . . . Ardore parentum honoribus plurimis valde sublimatus. . . . Rex . . . pro eo quod ipsum hominem Dei in juventute in suo ministerio habuisset, volebat eum inquietare pro eo quod sine sua jussione se tonsorasset. . . . Quidam pauperculus qui vehiculum ante portam ipsius regis demerserat. . . . De equo quem sedebat cum velocitate descendens, et pauperi manum porrexit, et ipsum plaustrum simul de loco levaverunt. Prospicientes vero multi qualiter se inquinaverat de luto deridebant. . . . Factus plus candens quam antea fuerat; pervenit in palatium regis et stabat ante eum et satellites ejus quasi agnus in medio luporum." — ACTA SS. O. S. B., tom. ii. pp. 502–514.

[110] "Si quando in ipsa visione nocturna per titillationem carnis illusionem habuisset . . . mergebat se in fluvium, et cum esset hyemis tempus in medio glacierum psalmodiam decantabat." — *Ibid.*, p. 506.

to preside over the colony of Grandval.[111] For it is evident that birth was a quality infinitely valuable to the founders of monastic institutions in these days, doubtless because it gave the heads of the community the *prestige* necessary to hold out, even in material matters, against the usurpation and violence of the nobles and great men whose possessions surrounded the new monasteries. Bishop Ouën, therefore, bestowed holy orders upon his old friend and companion, but without being able to prevent him from again seeking monastic life. He succeeded only in establishing Vandregisil in his own diocese, thanks to the munificence of the minister Erchinoald, who gave up a great uncultivated estate not far from the Seine to his kinsman, where the remains of an ancient city, destroyed in the Frank invasion, were still to be seen under the briers and thorns.

Colonies of Luxeuil upon the Seine.

Fontenelle.

648.

But the time of ruins was past; the hour of revival and reconstruction had come. In that desert place, Vandregisil built the abbey of Fontenelle, which was destined to occupy, under its proper name of St. Vandrille, so important a place in the ecclesiastical history of France and Normandy. The holy queen Bathilde, her son, King Clovis II., and many noble Neustrians, added rich donations to that of Erchinoald, whilst a great number of others came to share cenobitical life under the authority of Vandregisil. He had to build four churches, amid their cells, to make room for their devotions. He was particularly zealous in imposing upon them, along with the exercise of manual labor, the absolute renunciation of all individual property, which was the thing of all others most likely to clash with the inclinations of the sons of soldiers and rich men. And, says the hagiographer, it was admirable to see him instruct those who heretofore had taken away the possessions of others, in the art of sacrificing their own. Aided by their labors, he planted on a neighboring slope of good exposure the first vineyard which Normandy had known.[112]

[111] "Cœpit Waldebertus intra semetipsum tacitus cogitare si possit reperire de suis fratribus, ex genere nobili . . . qui ipsos monachos secundum tenorem regulæ gubernare et regere deberet." — Trouillat, op. cit. p. 52.

[112] "Ansbertus . . . hortatu viri Dei B. Wandregisili vineam plantare et excolere cœpit." — *Vita S. Ansberti*, c. i. We shall afterwards speak of this Ansbert, also a monk at Fontenelle, after having been one of the principal officials at the court of Dagobert. Wandregisil built a fifth church at the top of this vineyard, dedicated to St. Saturnin, which was rebuilt about 1030, and is considered the most ancient edifice in the diocese of Rouen, and one of the most curious in Normandy.

Opposition of the royal foresters.

His task was not always without danger; one day when he was laboring with his pious legion, the keeper of the royal forest, a portion of which had been given to Vandregisil, furious to see his charge thus lessened, approached the abbot to strike him with his lance; but, as happened so often, just as he was about to strike, his arm became paralyzed, the weapon fell from his hands, and he remained as if possessed, till the prayer of the saint whom he would have slain restored his faculties.[113] The royal foresters were naturally disposed to appropriate into personal estates the forests committed to their care, and which the kings only used occasionally for hunting. This was the cause of their animosity, which we shall often have to refer to, against the strangers endowed with such gifts who came to establish themselves there.

Conversion of the land of Caux.

Vandregisil, however, did not confine his activity to the foundation and government of his abbey. Fontenelle was situated in the country of Caux, that is, the land of the Caletes, who had been distinguished by the energy of their resistance to Cæsar, and who had figured among the other tribes of Belgian Gaul in the last struggle against the pro-consul, even after the fall of Alise and the heroic Vercingetorix.[114] The land of Caux was then Christian only in name; the inhabitants had fallen back into complete and brutal barbarism. The abbot of Fontenelle went throughout the whole country, preached the Gospel everywhere, procured the destruction of the idols whom the peasants persisted in worshipping, and transformed the land to such an extent that the country people never met a priest or monk without throwing themselves at his feet as before an image of Christ.[115]

Vandregisil, when he died, left three hundred monks in his monastery, and a memory so popular that, four centuries

[113] The chapel of Notre Dame de Caillouville, built upon the spot where this incident happened, was still existing in the time of Mabillon. It was demolished after the Revolution by a man named Lhérondel. A fountain, visited every year by many pilgrims, is still to be seen there. At the bottom of the basin, cut in the stone, is a rude representation of St. Radegund.

[114] *De Bello Gallico*, book viii. c. 7. Orosius, lib. vi. c. 7 and 11.

[115] "Illuc nobilium liberi undique concurrere . . . ita ut *nobilium multitudo virorum communia cum omnibus possideret omnia*. . . . Si quispiam proprium aliquid usurpare tentaret . . . a cæterorum remotus concilio . . . plectebatur. . . . Sed et omnes Caletorum populi ita brutis ac belluis similes ante adventum illius in hac regione fuerant, ut præter Christianæ fidei nomen virtus religionis pene abolita in illis locis fuerat. . . . Ut qui antea arripiebant aliena postea largirentur propria." — *Vita Secunda*, c. 15–22.

after his death, his name was still celebrated by a grateful posterity in rhymes translated from the Latin into the vulgar tongue.[116] In one of the chapels of that abbey which attracted and charmed all travellers on the Seine from Rouen to the sea, rude seats were shown which had been used by the founder and his two most intimate friends, the archbishop Ouën, and Philibert, the founder of Jumiéges, when they came to Fontenelle, where these three converted nobles met in long and pleasant conferences, in which their expectations of heavenly joy, and terrors of divine judgment, were mingled with a noble solicitude for the triumph of justice and peace in the country of the Franks.[117]

St. Philibert, founder of Jumiéges. 610-685.

Nothing, or almost nothing, remains of the architectural splendors of St. Vandrille; but the ruined towers of Jumiéges still testify to the few travellers upon the Seine the magnificence of another abbey, still more celebrated, which was long the noblest ornament of that portion of Neustria to which the Normans have given their name, and which, like Fontenelle, is connected by means of its founder, St. Philibert, with the work and lineage of Columbanus. The lives of these two founders show many analogies. Like Wandregisil, the young Phili-

[116] "Hic ille est Tetbaldus Vernonensis, qui multorum gesta sanctorum, sed et S. Wandregisili a sua latinitate transtulit atque in communem linguæ usum satis facunde retulit, ac sic ad quamdam tinnuli rhythmi similitudinem urbanas ex illis cantilenas edidit." — ACT. SS. O. S. B., sæc. iii. p. 1, p. 361. In *Vita S. Vulfram.* The abbey of Fontenelle, near Caudebec, took, like many others, the name of its founder, and was distinguished, during the eighth century, by a long line of saints. Up to 1790 it formed, with Jumiéges, one of the finest ornaments of the banks of the Seine. Now nothing remains of the four churches built by Vandregisil, the principal of which, the abbey church, was magnificently rebuilt in the thirteenth century. In 1828 their ruins were still beautiful and admired: since then the owner, M. Cyprien Lenoir, has destroyed them by sapping; the stones of the mullions and pillars have been used to pave the neighboring roads. An Englishman, more intelligent than the barbarous successors of the contemporaries of Dagobert, bought considerable fragments of these precious ruins, and conveyed them across the Channel to set them up in his park. The monastery, rebuilt and reformed under Louis XIV., by the congregation of St. Maur, is still in existence, transformed into a spinning-mill. The cloister, a monument of the fourteenth and sixteenth century, is admired. See the *Essai sur St. Vandrille*, by M. Langlois, and the learned and useful work, entitled *Les Eglises de l'Arrondissement d' Yvetot*, by M. l'Abbe Cochet, 1854, t. i. p. 49–73.

[117] "Monstrabantur . . . grabata et sedes ubi . . . considere soliti essent . . . quorum oratio non alia erat quam . . . de paradisi deliciis et gehennæ suppliciis . . . de justitia quoque . . . ac *patriæ* salute . . . et pace omnibus prædicanda." — *Vita*, c. 17. Another proof of the ignorance of those modern authors who have assumed the word and idea of *country* to be unknown in the middle ages.

bert was *recommended* by his father to King Dagobert, and at twenty left the court and military life for the cloister. Like him, and still more directly than he, he was imbued with the spirit of Columbanus, having been a monk and abbot in the monastery of Rebais, which had its immediate origin from Luxeuil, before he went on pilgrimage to Luxeuil itself, to Bobbio, and the other communities which followed the Irish rule. He also had ties of friendship from his youth with St. Ouën, the powerful archbishop of Rouen, and it was in the same diocese that he finally established himself, to build the great abbey which, like Fontenelle, was endowed by the gifts of Clovis II. and the holy queen Bathilde.

Philibert often visited his neighbor Wandregisil; he imitated him in working with his monks at the clearing of the conceded lands, which became fields and meadows of wonderful fertility, and like him he had to brave the animosity of the royal foresters, who stole his work-horses. Like Fontenelle, Jumiéges was built upon the site of an ancient Gallo-Roman castle, which was thus replaced by what contemporaries called "the noble castle of God." But situated upon the same banks of the Seine, and on a peninsula formed by the winding of the river, the abbey of Philibert was more accessible by water, and soon became a great centre of commerce. British and Irish sailors brought materials for clothing and shoes to the Religious there in exchange for their corn and cattle. Philibert required that, in all these barters with neighbors or strangers, the bargain should be more profitable to the purchasers than if they were dealing with laymen. The monks had great success in the fishing of some species of porpoise (*cetacea*) which ascended the Seine, and which produced oil to lighten their vigils. They also fitted out vessels in which they sailed to great distances to redeem slaves and captives.

The monks of Jumiéges engage in commerce and navigation.

Doubtless a portion of these captives contributed to increase the number of the monks of Jumiéges, which rose to nine hundred, without reckoning the fifteen hundred servants who filled the office of lay-brothers. They were under a rule composed by Philibert after attentive observation of numerous monasteries of France, Italy, and Burgundy, which he had visited for that end. This was adopted by most of the communities which were then formed in Neustria in imitation of his, and of which Jumiéges became the centre where abbots and monks vied in seeking education or revival. It combined the instructions of the fathers of the

desert, such as St. Basil and St. Macarius, with the precepts of the two great monastic patriarchs of the West, Benedict and Columbanus. But the influence of Columbanus naturally predominated, in consequence of the early monastic education of Philibert, and his long residence at Luxeuil and Bobbio. In the great church which he built for his abbey, the magnificence of which, attested by a contemporary narrative, amazes us, he raised an altar in honor of Columbanus, and of him alone among all the saints whose rules he had studied and practised.[118]

Philibert survived his friend, neighbor, and emulator, Wandregisil, nearly twenty years. He was succeeded by Aïchadre, a noble of Poitou, to whom belongs a legend written two centuries later, but which must be repeated here as a proof of the great numbers and angelical piety of the monks of the great Neustrian abbey. According to this tale, Aïchadre, who governed the nine hundred monks of whom we have before spoken, feeling himself on the eve of death, and fearing that after his death his monks might fall into the snares of sin, prayed the Lord to provide against it. The following night he saw an angel going round the dormitory of the Religious: this angel touched four hundred and fifty of them with the rod he held, and promised the abbot that in four days they should leave this life, and that when his turn was come, they should all come to meet him in heaven. The abbot, having acquainted his brethren, prepared them for this happy journey. They took the viaticum together, and afterwards held a chapter with those of the community whom the angel had not marked. Each of the elect placed himself between two of these last, and all together chanted songs of triumph. The faces of those who were to die soon began to shine, and, without giving

Death of the 450 elect at Jumiéges.

[118] *Vita S. Wandregisili*, c. 17; *Vita S. Philiberti*, c. 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 20, 32. "Cum pro fratrum compendiis mandaret exerceri negotia, amplius dare jubebat quam dari a sæcularibus consuetudo poscebat. Et propter hoc gaudente vicino populo de labore justo sanctum exuberabat commercium." — c. 21. "Intrans . . . reliqua cœnobia sub norma S. Columbani degentia, atque omnia monasteria . . . ut prudentissima apis quidquid melioribus florere vidit studiis, hoc suis traxit exemplis. Basilii sancta charismata, Macarii regulam, Benedicti decreta, Columbani instituta sanctissima lectione frequentabat assidua. . . . Multa monasteria per ejus exemplum sunt constituta in Neustria. Confluebant ad eum sacerdotes Dei . . . et de ejus Regula sua ornabant cœnobia." — C. 5, 20. Compare *Vit. S. Aichadri*, c. 21. Philibert founded, besides Jumiéges, the abbey of Noirmoutier, in an island on the coast of Poitou, and that of Montivillers, for women, in the country of Caux.

the least sign of pain, the four hundred and fifty passed from this life to the other: the first hundred at the hour of tierce, the second at sexte, the third at none, the fourth at vespers, and the last at compline. Their obsequies were celebrated for eight days; and those who survived them wept that they were not judged worthy to follow.[119] The mind of the ages of faith was so formed that such narratives increased the number of religious vocations, and contributed to root the great monastic foundations deeply in the heart of the nations.

St. Ouën and his brethren.

Bishop Ouën, whose influence and help had endowed the diocese of Rouen with the two powerful abbeys of Fontenelle and Jumiéges, was connected with Columbanus by a recollection of his earliest years. The great Irish monk was everywhere remarked by his love for children, and the paternal kindness he showed them. During his exile and journey from the court of the king of Neustria to that of Austrasia, he paused in a chateau situated upon the Marne, which belonged to a Frank noble,[120] the father of three sons named Adon, Radon, and Dadon, two of whom were still under age. Their mother led them to the holy exile that he might bless them; this benediction brought them happiness and governed their life. The whole three were, in the first place, like all the young Frank nobility, sent to the court of the king Clotaire II., and to that of his son Dagobert, who for some time reigned alone over the three Frank kingdoms. The eldest of the three brothers, Adon, was the first to break with the grandeurs and pleasures of secular life; he founded upon the soil of his own patrimony and upon a height which overlooked the Marne, the monas-

Foundation of Jouarre.

tery of Jouarre, which he put under the rule of Columbanus, and where he himself became a monk.

[119] "Occurrent tibi qui præcesserunt fratres, cum psalmis suscipientes te. . . . Quarto igitur die, post missam, absoluti omnes communicabant, et osculantes se in pace, ibant cum patre ad domum capituli: et præposuit singulis custodes psallentes. Et resplendebant facies morientium, quasi resurgentium. Quidam moriebantur ad tertiam . . . et reliqui circa completorium, qui omnes erant Christo incorporati. . . . Remanentes etiam flebant quia relinquebantur: fuit tamen luctus lætificans propter spem gloriæ." — Act. SS. Bolland., t. v. Septembr., p. 101. "Cœpit jam beata plebs tanquam in hora diei tertia ad finem properare dispositum, nullus parcens alteri, sed sicut senex ita et mediocris, et ut juvenis ita et puerulus. . . . Occubuit autem medietas hujus sanctæ familiæ." — Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. B.*, sæc. ii. t. ii. p. 930. According to another version, the 445 monks designated died in three days. This legend recalls that of St. Gwennolé, founder of the abbey of Landevenec, in Brittany, which has been versified by a Breton poet of our days, M. Briseux, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 Octobre 1857, p. 886.

[120] He was named Autharis, and his castle, Eussy.

Almost immediately after there was formed by the side of this first foundation another community of virgins, destined to become much more illustrious, and associated, a thousand years later, with the immortal memory of Bossuet.

Radon, the second of the brothers, who had become the treasurer of Dagobert, imitated the elder, and consecrated his portion of the paternal inheritance to the foundation of another monastery, also upon the Marne, and which was called after himself Reuil (*Radolium*). There now remained only the third, Dadon, who afterwards took the name of Ouën (*Audoënus*), and who, having become the dearest among all the leudes of Dagobert and his principal confidant, received from him the office of referendary, or keeper of the seal, by which, according to the custom of the Frank kings, all the edicts and acts of public authority were sealed. He, notwithstanding, followed the example of his brothers, and the inspiration which the blessing of Columbanus had left in their young hearts.[121] He sought among the forests which then covered La Brie a suitable site for the foundation which he desired to form and endow. He found it at last near a torrent called Rebais, a little to the south of the positions chosen by his brothers; it was a glade which was revealed to him for three successive nights by a resplendent cloud in the form of a cross. He built a monastery there which has retained the name of the torrent, although Ouën had at first given it that of Jerusalem, as a symbol of the fraternal peace and contemplative life which he had intended should reign there.[122] He also desired, like his brothers, to end his life in that retreat; but neither the

And of Rebais. 628-638.

[121] Jonas, *Vita S. Columbani*, c. 50. "Viri inclyti, optimates aulæ." — S. Audoen, *Vita S. Eligii*, i. c. 8. "Filii illustris viri Autharii, ex præclara Francorum progenie. . . . In proprio solo. . . . In patrimonio proprio. . . . In quo etiam monastica secundum B. Columbani Instituta una cum caterva . . . militavit. Gestans ejus annulum quo signabantur publice totius regni potiora signa vel edicta." — *Vita S. Agili*, c. 14.

[122] "Desiderans illic haberi collegium pacis et unanimæ fraternitatis contemplationem. . . . Cum Rex et cuncti proceres Francorum illi nollent adquiescere." — *Vita S. Agili*, c. 18, 19. Any ancient map of Champagne will show that the three monasteries of Jouarre, Reuil (reduced to the rank of a priory under Cluny), and Rebais, formed a sort of triangle between the Marne and the Morin. M. de Caumont has recently found in the subterranean church of Jouarre, which still exists, the inscription already published by Mabillon in honor of the first abbess of that celebrated community: "Hic membra post ultima teguntur | fata sepulcro beatæ | Theodiecheldis intemeratæ virginis genere nobilis meritis fulgens | strenua moribus flagrans in dogmate almo | Cenobii hujus mater sacratas Deo virgines | sumentes oleum cum lampadibus prudentes invitat | sponso filias occurrere X°. Exultat Paradisi in gloria." — *Bulletin Monumental*, t. ix. p. 186.

king nor the other leudes would consent to it, and he had to remain for some time longer at the Merovingian court, until he was elected bishop (at the same time as his friend Eloysius) by the unanimous consent of the clergy and people.

He exercised a sort of sovereignty at once spiritual and temporal throughout the whole province of Rouen; for he had obtained from the King of Neustria a privilege by the terms of which neither bishop, abbot, count, nor any other judge could be established there without his consent.[123] During the forty-three years of his rule, he changed the whole aspect of his diocese, covering it with monastic foundations, one of which, situated at Rouen itself, has retained his name, consecrated to art and history by that wonderful basilica which is still the most popular monument of Normandy.

639-683.

But Ouën had not left his beloved foundation of Rebais without a head worthy of presiding over its future progress. He desired to choose a ruler imbued with the spirit of that great saint whose memory remained always so dear to him.[124] He brought from Luxeuil the monk who seemed to him the best personification of the institute of Columbanus. It was Agilus, the son of that noble who had obtained the gift of Luxeuil for the Irish missionary from the Burgundian king. Like Ouën and his brothers, Agilus had been brought as a child to receive the blessing of Columbanus in his father's house, and was afterwards intrusted to the saint to be educated in the monastery, where he had adopted monastic life, and gained the affection and confidence of the whole community.[125] Associated with the mission of the successor of Columbanus among the pagan Warasques and Bavarians, his fame was great in all the countries under Frank dominion, and wherever he had been, at Metz, at Langres, and Besançon, he had excited universal admiration by his eloquence and the miraculous cures which were owing to his prayers. All these cities desired him for their bishop; but the monks of Luxeuil, above all, saw in him their future abbot. To bring him forth from that cloister which was his true mother-country, a written order of Dagobert was necessary, who made him first go to Com-

St. Agilus installed by St. Ouën at Rebais.

636-650.

[123] Lecointe, *Ann. Eccles.* ad ann. 681; H. Martin, ii. 163.

[124] "Qui S. Columbanum præstantissime dilexerat." — *Vita S. Agili*, c. 24.

[125] See page 561 for an account of the father of Agilus, and the mission with which he was charged to King Thierry, after the first expulsion of Columbanus.

piègne, where he received him pompously in the midst of his court, and bestowed on him, with the consent of the bishops and leudes assembled at the palace, the government of the new abbey. Twelve monks from Luxeuil entered with him, and were soon joined by a great number of nobles, from the royal retinue and the surrounding country, to such an extent that Agilus had as many as eighty disciples, among whom was the young Philibert, who was to bear the traditions of Columbanus from Rebais to Jumiéges. All devoted themselves to the labors of civilization and the duties of hospitality with that zeal which made the new monasteries so many agricultural colonies and assured shelters for travellers in these vast provinces of Gaul, which were thus finally raised from the double ruin into which Roman oppression and Barbarian invasion had thrown them.

Hospitality of Rebais.

The Irish who then flocked into Gaul on the steps of Columbanus, and who traversed it to carry the tribute of their ardent devotion to Rome, willingly halted at the door of the monastery where they were sure of meeting a pupil or admirer of their great countryman; and Agilus refreshed them plentifully with the good wine of the banks of Marne, till he sometimes almost exhausted the provisions of the monastery. But a pleasant narrative shows us his watchful charity in a still more attractive light. It was evening, a winter evening; the abbot, after having passed the day in receiving guests of an elevated rank, was going over the various offices of the monastery; when he reached the *xenodochium*, that is, the almonry or hospice, specially destined for the reception of the poor, he heard outside a feeble and plaintive voice, as of a man who wept. Through the wicket of the door, and by the half light, he saw a poor man, covered with sores, lying upon the ground and asking admittance. Turning immediately to the monk who accompanied him, he cried, "See how we have neglected our first duty for these other cares. Make haste and have something prepared for him to eat." Then, as he had with him all the keys of the house, which the porter took to him every evening after the stroke of compline, he opened the postern of the great door. "Come, my brother," he said, "we will do all for thee that thou needest." The sufferings of the leper prevented him from walking, and the abbot himself carried him in upon his shoulders and placed him upon a seat by the side of the fire. Then he hastened to seek

The poor traveller received in the twilight by Agilus.

water and linen to wash his hands; but when he returned the poor man had disappeared, leaving behind him a delicious perfume which filled the whole house, as if all the spices of the East or all the flowers of spring had distilled their odors there.[126]

These sweet expansions of charity were allied, under the influence of the Rule of Columbanus, to the most masculine virtues, among the women as well as among the men. During that same journey from Neustria to Austrasia, the illustrious exile, before he reached the house of the father of St. Ouën, had visited another family connected with theirs, which dwelt near Meaux, and the head of which was a powerful noble called Agneric, whose son Cagnoald had been a monk at Luxeuil from his childhood, and had accompanied the holy abbot in his exile. Agneric was invested with that dignity which has been translated by the title of *companion of the king;* and this king was Theodebert, to whose court Columbanus was bound. He received the glorious outlaw with transports of joy, and desired to be his guide for the rest of the journey. But before leaving, he begged Columbanus to bless all his house, and presented to him on that occasion his little daughter, who is known to us only under the name of Burgundofara, which indicates at once the exalted birth and Burgundian origin of her family,[127] as it were, *the noble baroness of Burgundy.* The saint gave her his blessing, but at the same time dedicated her to the Lord. History says nothing about the consent of her parents, but the noble young girl herself,

St. Faron and his brothers.

612-672.

[126] "Per edictum Regis. . . . Fultus nitore procerum. . . . Per consultum Episcoporum et nostrorum optimatum. . . . Multi ex primoribus palatii atque proceribus patriæ . . . peroptabant sub illius regimine monachicam ducere vitam. . . . Veniens plebs ex Hibernia . . . ob B. Agili famam laudabilem quem isdem Columbanus . . . nutriverat. . . . Vini copiam . . . in magno vase imperat abbas totum fratribus ac plebi propinari. . . . Audivit . . . velut plangentis hominis exilem vocem. . . . Erat enim adhuc quiddam diei. . . . Aperta fenestra quæ portæ inhærebat. . . . Ecce quomodo . . . tanta negleximus: perge velocius et para ei refectionem. . . . Veni, frater. . . . Hiems quippe erat. . . . Tanta fragrantia jocundi odoris domum replevit, velut si. . . ." — *Vita S. Agili auctore subæquali*, c. 17, 20, 23, 24, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 308.

[127] "Burgundiæ Farones vero, tam episcopi quam cæteri leudes." — Fredegaire, c. 41, ap. D. Bouquet, ii. 429. In chapter 44 he makes it a single word, *Burgundæfarones*, speaking of the Burgundian nobles met at the Council of Bonneuil. *Faron* comes, according to Dom Bouquet, from the word *fara*, which means *generation* or *line*, in *La Loi des Lombards*, v. iii. tit. xiv. Compare Paul the Deacon, lib. ii. c. 9. From this evidently proceeds the word *baron*, so long used to designate the leaders of the aristocracy in all the countries occupied by the Germanic tribes.

when she had reached a marriageable age, considered herself bound by that engagement, and resolutely opposed the marriage which her brother wished her to contract. She became ill, and was at the point of death. In the mean time the abbot Eustace, the successor of Columbanus at Luxeuil, returning from Italy to give an account to Clotaire II. of the mission to his spiritual father with which the king had charged him, passed by the villa of Agneric. At sight of the dying girl, he reproached her father with having violated the engagement taken towards God by the saint whose blessing he had asked. Agneric promised to leave his daughter to God if she recovered. Eustace procured that recovery. But scarcely had he departed for Soissons, when the father, unfaithful to his promise, attempted again to constrain his daughter to a marriage which she resisted. She then escaped and took refuge in the Cathedral at St. Peter. Her father's retainers followed her there, with orders to bring her away from the sanctuary, and threaten her with death. "Do you believe, then," she said to them, "that I fear death? make the trial upon the pavement of this church. Ah! how happy should I be to give my life in so just a cause to Him who has given His life for me!"[128] She held out until the return of Abbot Eustace, who finally delivered her from her father, and obtained from him a grant of land on which Burgundofara might found the monastery of Faremoutier, which was called by her name. Her example drew as many followers, among the wives and daughters of the Frank nobility, as her cousins had gained of their own sex, for their monasteries of Rebais and Jouarre. This corner of La Brie became thus a sort of monastic province dependent upon Luxeuil. Burgundofara lived there forty years, faithfully

Burgundofara braves martyrdom to become a nun.

Faremoutier.

About 617.

[128] "Vir nobilis Hagnericus, Theodeberti conviva . . . et consiliis ejus grata. . . . Quæ infra infantiles annos benedicens eam Domino vovit." — Jonas, *Vita S. Columbani*, c. 50. "Accedens ad stratum puellæ, sciscitatur si suæ fuerit adsentationis quod contra B. Columbani interdictum post vota cœlestia rursus iteravit terrena. . . . Mortem me formidare putatis? In hoc ecclesiæ pavimento probate. . . . Quem (Agrestinum) Christi virgo non femineo more, sed virili confodit responsione." — *Ibid.*, *Vita S. Eustasii*, c. 1, 2, 14. The same Jonas wrote, during the lifetime of the Abbess Burgundofara, a series of anecdotes regarding the various nuns of the monastery, which throws great light upon the internal government of a great abbey of women in the seventh century. (Act. SS. O. S. B., v. ii. p. 420.) He carefully records the origin of all these nuns; among them we find one Saxon, probably come from England, which had then become Christian, or perhaps one of the prisoners of Clotaire.

observing the Rule of St. Columbanus, and maintaining it manfully against the perfidious suggestions of the false brother Agrestin, who attempted to engage her in his revolt against Eustace and the traditions of their common master. "I will have none of thy novelties," she said to him; "and as for those whose detractor thou art, I know them, I know their virtues, I have received the doctrine of salvation from them, and I know that their instructions have opened the gates of heaven to many. Leave me quickly, and give up thy foolish thoughts."

Cagnoald.

The eldest brother of Burgundofara, Cagnoald, was, as has been said, a monk at Luxeuil, and the faithful companion of Columbanus during his mission among the Alamans: he afterwards became bishop of Laon. His other brother, who, like his sister, has only retained for posterity the name of his rank — that of Faron, or Baron — was also a bishop at Meaux, the centre of the family domains. But before he adopted the ecclesiastical condition, he had distinguished himself in war, and taken a notable part in the victorious campaign of Clotaire II. against the Saxons. It is known how, according to the ordinarily received tradition, Clotaire disgraced his victory by massacring all his Saxon prisoners who were higher in stature than his sword. All that Faron could do was to save from the cruelty of his king the Saxon envoys, charged with an insolent mission to the king of the Franks, whom Clotaire had ordered to be put to death. Faron had them baptized, and said to the king, "These are no longer Saxons; they are Christians;" upon which Clotaire spared them. If one of his successors upon the see of Meaux, who two centuries later wrote his biography, may be believed, the glory of Faron eclipsed that of Clotaire himself in the popular songs which peasants and women vied in repeating, as happened to David in the time of Saul.[129] The

Faron.

He protects the Saxon envoys.

[129] "Ex qua victoria carmen publicum juxta rusticitatem per omnium pene volitabat ora ita canentium, fœminæque choros inde plaudendo componebant:

'De Clothario est canere Rege Francorum,
Qui ivit pugnare in gentem Saxonum,
Quam graviter provenisset missis Saxonum,
Si non fuisset inclytus Faro de gente Burgundionum.'

"Et in fine hujus carminis:

'Quando veniunt Missi Saxonum in terram Francorum,
Faro ubi erat princeps,
Instinctu Dei transeunt per urbem Meldorum,
Ne interficiantur a Rege Francorum.'"

— Hildegarii Meld. Episcop., *Vita S. Faronis*, c. 72–78. Compare Rettberg, t. ii. p. 394.

generous Faron had again, according to the same author, to struggle with Clotaire on an occasion which should have left a lasting recollection in the grateful hearts of the poor. One day, when the "knight of God" accompanied the king to the chase, a poor woman came out of the wood, and pursued the king with her complaints, explaining her great distress to him. Clotaire, annoyed, went off at a gallop. Faron, while escorting him, held a language in which we shall see the noble freedom of German manners employed in the service of charity and truth. "It is not for herself that this poor woman entreats you, but for you. Her wretchedness weighs heavily on her; but the responsibility of the royalty, which is intrusted to you, weighs still more heavily on you. She trusts her concerns to you, as you trust yours to God. She asks little of you compared to what you ask every day of God. How can you expect that he will listen to you, when you turn away your ear from this poor creature whom he has committed to your keeping?" The king answered: "I am pursued by such cries every day, and in all quarters; my ears are deafened by them; I am disgusted and worn out." Upon which he plunged into the wood and sounded his horn with all his might, to encourage the dogs. But some minutes after his horse stumbled, and the king hurt his foot seriously. Then he perceived that he had been wrong. The leude who spoke to him with so much Christian boldness was well qualified to be a bishop. He shortly after gave up his wife,[130] and the world, and becoming bishop of Meaux, devoted his patrimony to found monasteries for the reception of those Anglo-Saxons who, recently converted, began to appear among the Franks, and whose daughters came in great numbers to take the veil at Faremoutier. He did the same for the Scots and Irish, for whom he had a particular regard, and in whom he doubtless honored, by a domestic tradition, the memory of their compatriot Columbanus.[131]

He intercedes for a poor woman with Clotaire II. while they are hunting.

[130] See above, page 592, in note 92, upon the tonsure, the curious anecdote of this woman and her hair.

[131] "Miles Christi cum eo equitans. . . . Non hæc paupercula tristi dolore clamat pro se, sed pro te. Quamvis illa angustetur lacrymabili corde, tibi angustandum est potius pro commisso regimine. Illa in te spem ponit humili prece pro se, et tu de propriis rebus in Deo pro te. . . . Quomodo enim Maximus . . . quando suæ tibi commissæ pauperculæ nec etiam curas attendre. . . . Ad hæc rex: Omnium dierum accessus et subrecessus tali meas sollicitant aures nausea frequenter diverberatas, et ad hæc curandum continue animus sopitur lassatus. Tunc cornu curvo plenis buccis anheliter latratus canum acuit." — HILDEGARIUS, c. 81, 82, ap. ACT. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 591.

Other colonies of Luxeuil in Champagne.

The Irish St. Fiacre.

640-670.

To any who desire to study more closely the double action of the Irish emigrants and the colonies of Luxeuil in that portion of Frankish Gaul which has since been called l'Ile de France and Champagne, St. Fiacre, whom we have already seen occupied in transforming the wooded glades given him by the Bishop of Meaux into gardens, and cultivating there for the poor those vegetables which have procured for him, down to our own day, the title of patron of the gardeners,[132] should be pointed out as one of the Hibernians

St. Fursy.

received by St. Faron. Not far from him would be found another Irishman, St. Fursy, who came to seek repose, as first abbot of Lagny-sur-Marne, from the fatigues of a life worn out by preaching, as well as troubled by that famous vision of heaven and hell, which appears with justice among the numerous legends of the middle ages which were forerunners of the *Divina Comedia*,[133] and from which he emerged with the special mission of denouncing, as the principal causes of the loss of souls, the negligence of pastors,

St. Frobert of Moutier-la-Celle, near Troyes.

643-673.

and the bad example of princes.[134] Moutier-la-Celle, at the gates of Troyes, built upon a marshy island, more suitable for reptiles than men, by the abbot Frobert, who was so simple and childish as to rouse the derision of his brethren at Luxeuil, but who was intelligent and generous enough to consecrate all his rich patrimony to found the sanctuary built near his native town, should also be visited.[135] Farther off, to the east, we should see Hautvilliers [136] and Montier-en-Der, both sprung from the

Berchaire.

636-685.

unwearied activity and fervent charity of Berchaire, an Aquitain noble, trained to monastic life under Walbert at Luxeuil, from whence he issued to become the fellow-laborer of the metropolitan of Rheims, and to gain for his works the generous and permanent assistance of the kings and all the high nobility of Austrasia. He died, assassinated by a monk who was his godson, and whose insubordination he had repressed.[137]

[132] See page 535.

[133] Ozanam, *Des Sources Poétiques de la Divine Comédie*, 1845, p. 46.

[134] "Per negligentiam Doctorum, per mala exempla pravorum principum." Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 291.

[135] One of the brethren having sent him for compasses, which were required for writing, he was sent back with a millstone on his shoulders, taking advantage of the double meaning of the word *circinus*, which, in monk Latin, meant at once *compass* and *millstone*. — *Vita S. Frodob.*, c. 7.

[136] See p. 527, the legend of the foundation of Hautvilliers.

[137] "Tanquam athleta recentissimus militiæ gymnasium cœlestis. . . . Corporis quietis impatiens. . . . Regibus . . . ac regiæ dignitatis proceribus

Finally, upon the mountain which overlooks the episcopal city of Laon, celebrated for having up to that time resisted all the Barbarians who had successively besieged it, we should see the vast monastery erected by an illustrious widow, St. Salaberga, whose father was lord of the *villa* of Meuse, situated near the source of the river which bears that name, and very near Luxeuil. While still young, but blind, she had owed the recovery of her sight to Eustace, the first successor of Columbanus at Luxeuil. She was married the first time because of her extreme beauty, but, becoming a widow almost immediately, and desirous of becoming a nun, was obliged to marry again to escape the jealous intervention of Dagobert, who, like all the Merovingian kings, was as slow to consent to the monastic vocation of the daughters and heiresses of his leudes as to that of their sons, and who insisted upon their speedy marriage to nobles of the same rank. But, at a later period, owing to the influence of Walbert, the successor of Eustace, she was enabled, at the same time as her husband, to embrace monastic life, and for ten years ruled the three hundred handmaids of Christ who collected under her wing, most of whom came like herself from the noble race of the Sicambrians, as the hagiographers of the seventh century delight to prove, in speaking of the male and female saints whose lives they relate.[138]

St. Salaberga at Laon. 610-655.

It would, however, be a grave error to believe that the nobility alone were called, among the Franks and Gallo-Romans, to fill up the monastic ranks, and preside over the new foundations which distinguished every year of the Merovingian period. Luxeuil and its colonies furnished more than one proof to the contrary. A little shepherd of Auvergne, named Walaric, which has been softened into Valery, roused by the example of the noble children of the neighborhood

Colonies of Luxeuil in Ponthieu.

The shepherd Valery.

tam gratum acceptabilemque. . . . Palatii optimatis ita in cunctis affabilis. . . . Tam ea quæ sui juris . . . quam quæ ab ipsis Francorum primoribus obtineri poterant." — Adson, *Vita S. Bercharii*, c. 7, 11, 12, 13. This life, written by one of St. Berchaire's successors at Montier-en Der, is one of the most interesting works in the great collection of *Acta* brought together by D'Achery and Mabillon, although it has not the weight of a contemporary production. An excellent work, entitled *Les Moines du Der*, by M. l'Abbe Bouillevaux, has been written upon this abbey. The abbatial church, which is still existing, is one of the finest monastic churches in France.

[138] "Erat enim decora venustaque vultu. . . . Metuens ne ob filiam iram regis sævitiamque incurreret. . . . Jam enim opinio ejus ad aures regias pervenerat. . . . Ipse ex Sicambrorum prosapia spectabili ortus. . . . Inter cæteras nobilium Sicambrorum feminas." — *Vita S. Salabergæ, auctore coævo*, c. 6, 9, 17.

who went to schools, asked one of their teachers to make him out an alphabet, and found means, as he kept his father's sheep, to learn not only his letters, but the entire Psalter. From thence to the cloister the transition was easy. But after having lived in two different monasteries, he felt himself drawn towards the great abbey from which the fame of Columbanus shone over all Gaul. He was received there and intrusted with the care of the novices' garden. He succeeded so well in driving away the insects and worms, his vegetables were so wholesome and well-flavored, his flowers so fresh and sweet, that Columbanus saw in this a mark of divine favor; and as the fervent gardener carried everywhere with him the perfume of these flowers, which followed him even into the hall where the abbot explained the Scriptures, Columbanus, delighted, said to him one day, "It is thou, my well-beloved, who art the true abbot and lord of this monastery." After the exile of the great Celt, Valery aided the new abbot Eustace to defend, by means of persuasion, the patrimony and buildings of the monastery against the invasions of the neighboring population. But soon the missionary fever seized him. He obtained permission from Eustace to go and preach, following the example of their spiritual master, among the nations where idolatry still struggled with Christianity. He directed his steps to the environs of Amiens, upon the shores of the Britannic sea, in that portion of Neustria where the Salian Franks had chiefly established themselves. Guided by zeal and charity, he penetrated everywhere, even to the *mâls*, or judicial assizes, held, according to the custom of the Germans, by the count of the district. According to the unfailing habit of the monks and abbots of that time, he appeared there to endeavor to save the unfortunate, who were condemned, from execution. The King of Neustria, Clotaire II., always favorable to those who came from Luxeuil, permitted him to establish himself at Leuconaus, a place situated at the mouth of the Somme, where the high cliffs, bathed by the sea, seemed to the monks collected around him to be immense edifices, whose summits reached the sky. He made it a sort of maritime Luxeuil. He went out unceasingly to sow his missionary discourses, which exposed him to a thousand insults and dangers. Sometimes the idolaters, seeing the fall of their sacred oaks, threw themselves upon him with their axes and sticks, then stopped, disarmed by his

Gardener at Luxeuil.

Missionary near Amiens.

Founder of Leuconaüs.

594-622.

Opposition which he met,

calm intrepidity! Sometimes even the judges and priests of the country made him pay for their hospitality by rude and obscene jokes. To escape from their impure talk, he had to leave their roof and fireside. "I wished to warm my frame a little by your fire, because of the great cold," he said; "but your odious conversation forces me, still frozen, out of your house." He was, however, of extreme gentleness, and softened the observance of the rule, so far as concerned penances, with an indulgence which scarcely consisted with Celtic tradition. But his unpopularity lasted even after his death among a portion of the people whom he had undertaken to convert, as is proved by a little dialogue recorded by his historian. On the spot where he had cut down a tree venerated by the idolaters, at Aoust or Ault, upon the road to Eu, the Christian peasants raised an oratory consecrated to his memory; but the women of the old Frank races, passing before that modest sanctuary, still testified their repugnance and scorn for the monastic apostle. "Dear mother," said a daughter to her mother, "would these people have us to venerate the man whom we used to see going about the country mounted on an ass, and miserably clad?" "Yes," answered the mother; "it is so; these peasants erect a temple in honor of him who did among us only vile and contemptible things."

And which lasted after his death.

The memory of Valery, thus scorned by his contemporaries, was nevertheless to grow more and more brilliant during the course of ages; and we shall see him on two solemn occasions receive the homage of the great princes who have founded the two greatest monarchies of Christendom, Hugh Capet and William the Conqueror.[139]

[139] "Oviculas patris sui per pascua circumagens. . . . Depoposcit ut sibi alphabetum scriberet. . . . Cuncta virentia, jocunda, amœna atque intacta conspiciens. . . . Odorem magnæ fragrantiæ et mirandæ suavitatis. . . . Tu es merito abbas monasterii et senior, mihi, diligende. . . . Ubi quidam comes . . . juxta morem sæculi concioni præsidebat, quod rustici *mallum* vocant. . . . Volui propter rigorem frigoris . . . immo nunc exire non calefactus a vobis compellor. . . . Pars quæ super scopulos et ingentia saxa ab imis ad summa erigitur, aularum vel ædium fabricam in excelsa aeris fastigia . . . mundo vel vicinæ regioni præbet spectaculum. . . . Illa quæ ex his prior esse videbatur contemnens. . . . Filia cum indignatione. . . . Dulcissima genitrix, numquid illo in loco habitatores venerari conantur illum quem ante hos annos asello insidentem despicabili habitu cernebamus? Huic vero, ut ais, filia, rustici volunt fieri memoriam cujus opera apud nos vilia et contemptu digna videbantur."—*Vita S. Walarici*, c. 1, 7, 8, 11, 13, 28. The abbey of Leuconaüs became the town of St. Valery-sur-Somme, one of the most prosperous ports of the Channel during the middle ages. This town is situated upon a height, forming a sort of island or promontory between the

The inhabitants of Ponthieu (a name which from that period was borne by the country bordering the Somme, where Valery had established himself) seem to have had a decided objection to monks of the Irish school. Two of the first companions of Columbanus, arriving from Ireland along with him, and coming to preach in these regions, were overwhelmed with insults and ill usage. At the moment when they were about to be violently expelled from the place, a noble named Riquier came to their assistance, and received them into his house. In return for his hospitality they inspired him with love for all the Christian virtues, and even for monastic life; and that conquest indemnified them for their rebuff. Riquier became a priest and a monk, and himself began to preach to the populations who had given so bad a reception to his Irish guests. He succeeded beyond all his expectations, and made himself heard not only by the poor, whose miseries he consoled, but also by the rich and powerful, whose excesses he censured severely. The greatest nobles of the country were favorable to him, including even the keepers of the royal forests, whose colleagues showed so much hostility to the monastic apostles on the banks of the Seine.[140] The success of his eloquence was also a triumph for charity; he devoted the numerous alms which were brought him to redeem captives, to relieve the lepers and other unfortunates who were attacked by contagious and disgusting diseases. After having extended his apostolic labors as far as the Britannic Isles, he returned to found in his own domains at Centule, north of the Somme, a monastery which was afterwards to take his own name, and become one of the most considerable monasteries of the Carlovingian period. In the mean time Dagobert, who had succeeded his father Clotaire II. in Neustria, went to visit him in his retreat, and invited him to come and take a place at his own table, among those *companions of the king* who formed, as is well known, the highest aristocracy among the Franks. Riquier ac-

St. Riquier.

Founder of Centule.

625-645.

Somme and the sea. Defended on all sides by abrupt rocks, this isle had to be fortified to the south by an intrenchment, the remains of which are still visible, and which form a boulevard covered with grass, called the Chemin Vert. Tradition asserts this to have been the habitual walk of the abbot Valery, and that it was his footsteps which formed the path. — LEFILS, *Histoire de St. Valery et du Compté de Vimeu*, Abbeville, 1858, p. 6. St. Valery-en-Caux, now the chief town of the district of Seine Inferieure, owes its origin to the removal, by Richard Cœur-de-Lion, in 1197, of the relics of the holy founder of Leuconaüs.

[140] See page 610.

cepted without hesitation; he took advantage of these occasions to tell the king the same truth which the other Franks had received so well at his hands. He reproved him with priestly freedom and authority, exhorted him not to pride himself on his honor or wealth, and to discourage the adulation of his courtiers; and asked him how he expected to stand at the day of judgment to answer for the many thousands of men who were intrusted to him, he who would have difficulty enough in rendering an account for his own soul? The young Dagobert received his instructions so well that he made the Abbot Riquier a special donation for the purpose of keeping up the lights of his church, in memory of that invisible light of Christian truth with which the voice of the monk had enlightened his soul.[141] Despite their incessantly renewed cruelties and unchristian manners, all the Merovingian kings at least listened to the truth, and even honored those who did them the honor of speaking it to them boldly.

His intercourse with Dagobert.

At no great distance from Ponthieu, and still in the country occupied by the Salian Franks, but higher up towards the north, upon the confines of the two Gaulish tribes of the Atrebates and Morins, we find another Luxeuil colony, reserved for a more brilliant destiny then any of those we have yet mentioned. Audomar, since called Omer, was the son of a noble from the neighborhood of Constance, a city of Alamannia, which was subject, as has been already said, to the Aus-

Colonies of Luxeuil among the Morins.

St. Omer.
612-667.

[141] "A rusticis et popularibus illius loci . . . injuriis afflictos et opprobriis castigatos. . . . Durus invector potentibus . . . istorum superbiam severa castigatione reprimens. . . . Gislemarus, vir illustris. . . . Maurontus, habilis vir, et terrarum vel silvarum ad regem pertinentium servator. . . . Nec leprosos vel elephantiacos exhorruit. . . . Sacerdotali auctoritate libera voce castigavit; denuntians ei ne in sæculari superbiret potentia . . . ne vanis adulantium extolleretur rumoribus . . . et hoc magis timendo cogitaret, quia potentes potenter tormenta patiuntur . . . et qui vix sufficit pro se solo rationem reddere pro tantis millibus populi sibi commissi . . . qua castigatione rex ut fuit sapiens benigne suscepta, congaudensque ejus libera veritatis fiducia." — ALCUIN., *Vita S. Richarii*, c. 2, 5, 10, 11, 12. Compare *Chronic. Centulense in Spicilegio*, vol. ii. p. 295, and MABILLON, *Ann. Benedict.*, book ii. c. 60. A passage of Alcuin seems little in harmony with what is said in the *Chronicle of Centule* and by the Abbot Ingelram in his *Vie Métrique*, in the eleventh century, concerning the illustrious birth of Riquier, but indicates, on the contrary, that he was, like Valery, of rustic origin: "Non tam nobilibus juxta sæculi parentibus ortus quam moribus honestus . . . ita ut in *rustica vita* quædam præsaga futura sanctitatis gereret," c. 1. But this statement is contradicted by other details, reported by Alcuin himself. Centule, under the name of St. Riquier, now a little town of the Somme, has preserved its magnificent abbey church. Abbeville, the ancient capital of Ponthieu (*Abbatis-villa*), was a small holding of the abbey of Centule.

trasian royalty. Perhaps, in passing through this country, Columbanus had already instructed and won him: history gives us no information on this point, but proves that a little after the sojourn of the Irish apostle upon the banks of the Lake of Constance, the young Omer presented himself at Luxeuil, bringing his father with him, a very rare junction in monastic annals. Abbot Eustace admitted both among the number of his monks. The father remained there until the end of his life; the son left Luxeuil twenty years after to become bishop of Therouanne; he had been suggested to the choice of Dagobert and the Frank nobles by the bishop of Laon, himself formerly a monk of Luxeuil. The country of the Morins, of which Therouanne was the capital, had been in vain evangelized by martyrs, from the first introduction of the faith into Gaul: it had fallen back into idolatry; the few Christians who had been trained there, since the conquest and conversion of Clovis, were bowed down with coarse superstitions. The new bishop perceived that he needed assistance to accomplish such a task. Some years after his consecration, he begged Abbot Walbert of Luxeuil to send him three of his former brethren, who had, like himself, come to Luxeuil from the banks of Lake Constance. He installed them in an estate situated on the banks of the Aa, and called Sithiu, which he had just received as a gift from a rich and powerful pagan noble whom he had baptized with all his family. This estate was a sort of island amid a vast marsh, which could scarcely be approached, save in a boat. There rose, at the same time, the celebrated abbey which at a later period took the name of St. Bertin, after the youngest of the three monks set from Luxeuil,[142] and upon a neighboring height a little church, which has become the cathedral of the episcopal town, and is still known by the name of the apostle of Morinia. His body was deposited there after thirty years of apostolical labors and heroic charity, which changed the aspect of the entire province. It is round the cemetery intended for the reception of the monks of St. Bertin that the existing town of St. Omer has been formed.

637.

Foundation of Sithiu.

[142] Of the two others, Mommolin was the first abbot of Sithiu, and afterwards succeeded St. Eloysius in the see of Noyon. Ebertrammus was abbot of the monastery of St. Quentin. The *Annales Benedict.*, lib. xvi. c. 56, contains a very curious miniature of the seventh century, in which St. Mommolin is represented with the Scotch or Irish tonsure, which had been the object of so many disputes, and St. Bertin with the Roman tonsure or *crown*, and holding the curved cross, which was then common to abbots and bishops.

Bertin, the countryman and relation of Omer, vied with him in his zeal for preaching and the conversion of the diocese which had adopted him. The rule of St. Columbanus and the customs of Luxeuil were observed in his monastery, where there were now two hundred monks, in all their severity; he exercised, like Columbanus himself, an irresistible influence over the nobles who surrounded him. Aided by their gifts, and the unwearied diligence of his monks, he at last succeeded, by successive elevations of the soil, in transforming the vast marsh in which he had established himself into a fertile plain. When he gave up the dignity of abbot, which he had held for fifty years, in order, according to the custom of most of the holy founders of those days, to prepare himself better for death, the great monastery which has immortalized his name, and produced twenty-two saints venerated by the Church,[143] had attained the height of its moral and material prosperity.[144] Of all the swarms from the inexhaustible hive of Luxeuil, none were more productive or brilliant than that with which these four Alamans, brought from the frontiers of Helvetia to the shores of the North Sea, enriched the wild Morinian country. The heirs of Columbanus found themselves thus established upon the soil of Belgium, the Christian conquest of which was half to do over again, and half to begin. A noble part was reserved to them in this work, which they were careful not to fall short of.

St. Bertin. 659-709.

The necessities of our narrative have led us far from Luxeuil to seek her distant colonies or scions: we must now return to her neighborhood to point out the house which was perhaps the most illustri-

The saints of Remiremont in the Vosges. 614-653.

[143] Among these should be named the Armorican Winnoc, of royal race, a disciple of St. Bertin, and founder of the monastery and town which bear his name — Berghes-Saint-Winnoc or Vinox. He died in 696.

[144] The Bollandists (vol. ii. Sept., p. 549–630) have clearly elucidated all that belongs to the life of St. Bertin and his various biographies. It may be observed that the abbey of Sithiu afterwards took the name of St. Bertin, as happened to a number of important monasteries which were named from their founder, or from the saint whose relics were venerated there. Thus the name of Agaune was replaced by that of St. Maurice, Condat by St. Eugende (afterwards St. Claude), Fontenelle by St. Vandrille, Glanfeuil by St. Maur, Leuconaüs by St. Valery, Centule by St. Riquier, Fleury by St. Benoît-sur-Loire, Habend by Remiremont, &c. This abbey of St. Bertin, at first called Sithiu, was the principal abbey of Artois, and the noblest ornament of the city of St. Omer, the municipality of which destroyed it a few years ago, under pretence of giving work to the laborers. — Victor Hugo, *Guerre aux Démolisseurs*, 1852. Enough remains of this immense church to show the pious grandeur of past generations, and the stupid Vandalism of their descendants.

ous of her daughters. Let us then re-enter that southern cluster of the Vosges which marks the boundaries of Austrasia and Burgundy, and where rise, not far from each other, the Moselle and the Meurthe, the Meuse and the Saone. Upon a mountain whose base is bathed by the clear and limpid waters of the Moselle, very near its source, amid forests which, a century ago, were still inhabited by bears,[145] and at a distance of some leagues north from Luxeuil, rose a castle belonging to the noble Romaric. This wealthy leude had seen his property confiscated and his father slain during the fratricidal struggle between the two grandsons of Brunehault, Theodebert and Thierry; but after the death of the latter, he had recovered his vast patrimony and occupied a high position at the court of Clotaire II., then sole master of the three Frank kingdoms.[146]

Romaric.

While living as a layman, this nobleman already practised all the virtues, when God willed, as the contemporary narrator tells, to recompense his knight for the valor which he had displayed in the struggles of the world, and to conduct him to the fields of celestial light.[147] Amatus, a monk of Luxeuil, noble like himself, but of Roman race,[148] came to preach in Austrasia. This Amatus, or Amé, had been almost from his cradle offered by his father to the monastery of Agaune, which, situated near the source of the Rhine, attracted the veneration and confidence of all the faithful of the provinces bordering that river. He had lived thirty years either at Agaune itself or in an isolated cell upon the top of a rock, which still overhangs the celebrated monastery, as if about to crush it. There this noble Gallo-Roman, always barefooted and clad in a sheep's skin, lived upon water and barley-bread alone; the water gushing from a limpid fountain, which he had obtained by his prayers, was received in a little basin which he had hollowed and covered with lead; the barley was the produce of a little field which he cultivated with his own hands, and ground by turning a

Amatus.

[145] The last bear killed at Remiremont was in 1709.

[146] "Nobilis in palatio . . . clarissimis parentibus procreatus . . . in Lotharii regis palatio cum cæteris electus." — *Vita S. Romarici, auct. monacho subpari*, in Acr. SS. O. S. B., vol. ii. p. 399. "Qui primus inter nobiles fuerat apud Theodebertum habitus." — *Vita S. Eustasii, auc coævo; ibid.*, p. 112.

[147] "Ineffabilis Deus, videns militem suum sub tenebrosis hujus sæculi bellis fortiter belligerantem, voluit illum ad lucidos producere campos." — *Ibid.*, p. 399.

[148] "Nobilibus natus parentibus, ex Romana oriundus stirpe, in suburbio Gratianopolitanæ civitatis." — *Vita S. Amati*, c. ii.; *ibid.*, p. 121.

millstone with his arms, like the slaves of antiquity. This fatiguing labor was to him a preservative against sleep and the temptations of the flesh. Abbot Eustace of Luxeuil, returning from Lombardy after his fruitless mission to Columbanus, stopped at Agaune, and decided Amatus upon following him to Luxeuil. The gentleness of the anchorite, his eloquence, and even the noble and serene beauty of his features, won all hearts.[149]

Amatus was nominated by the monks of Luxeuil, on account of his eloquence, to bear the word of God into the Austrasian cities. Romaric received him at his table, and, during the repast, inquired of him the best way of working out his salvation. "Thou seest this silver dish," said the monk; "how many masters, or rather slaves, has it already had, and how many more shall it have still? And thou, whether thou wilt or not, thou art its serf; for thou possessest it only to preserve it. But an account will be demanded of thee; for it is written, 'Your silver and gold shall rust, and that rust shall bear witness against you.' I am astonished that a man of great birth, very rich, and intelligent like thyself, should not remember the answer of the Saviour to him who asked him how he should attain eternal life: 'If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and follow me; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.'"[150] From that moment Romaric was vanquished by the love of God and the desire of heaven. He distributed all his lands to the poor, with the exception of his castle of Habend, freed a multitude of serfs of both sexes, and went to Luxeuil, taking with him all that remained of his wealth, to become a monk. When he presented himself to the abbot to have his hair cut, according to the rite of admission into the order, several of the serfs whom he had liberated appeared at the monastery for the same purpose. He gladly recognized his old servants, not only as brethren, but as superiors; for he sought the lowest

Romaric, converted by Amatus.

[149] "In devexo celsissimi montis rupe . . . per obliqua montis saxosi inter periculosos scopulos . . . latitabat. Cisternam plumbeam. . . . Molam, quam tunc manu agebat, cum canenti ei fessis membris somnus obreperet . . . ut tentationem carnis vel somnum corporis per laborem molæ abigeret. . . . Serenus vultu, hilaris adspectu, præclarus et celer eloquio." — *Vita S. Amati*, p. 121.

[150] "Cumque jam mensa posita esset, cœpit inter epulas flagitare. . . . Cernis hunc discum argenteum; quantos iste dudum servos habuit, quantosque deinceps habiturus est. Et tu, velis, nolis, nunc servus suus es. . . . Ausculta paululum, vir bone: cum sis nobilitate parentum excelsus, divitiis inclytus, ingenioque sagax, miror, si non nosti," &c. — *Vita S. Amati*, p. 123.

occupations in the monastery, and surpassed all the brethren in his care for the cultivation of the gardens, where he learned the Psalter by heart as he labored.[151]

After some years' residence there, during which time his friendship with Amatus became intimate and affectionate, the two friends left Luxeuil, where, for some unknown reason, they had incurred the animadversion of Abbot Eustace. With his consent, however, they went together to the estate which Romaric had reserved to himself. The *Castrum Habendi*, as it was called, had been once a Roman fortress; the remains of a temple, statues, and some tombs, were still visible, as at Luxeuil, upon the height of a steep hill, situated between two valleys, the base of which was watered by two tributaries of the Moselle. They built a church there, placed as many as seven chapels upon the sides of the hill,[152] and afterwards founded there the greatest female monastery which had been seen in Gaul. Amatus took the government of it, but soon devolved it upon Romaric, and the house was called, after the latter, Remiremont.[153]

Founds Habend, or Remiremont.

620.

In this celebrated abbey, which was immediately put under the rule of St. Columbanus by its two founders, everything was established on a magnificent scale, owing to the

[151] "Illos denique servulos quos dudum ministros habuerat, socios sibi detondens plerosque adjunxit; et effectus est illorum subditus, quorum prius dominus præpotens fuerat. . . . Ut quidquid despicabile in monasterio agendum esset, ipse adsumeret. Hortorum tamen frequentius præ ceteris fratribus operator exsistens, psalmos jugiter tradebat memoriæ." — *Vita S. Romarici*, p. 400.

[152] See for these details the excellent *Etude Historique sur l'Abbaye de Remiremont*, by M. A. Guinot, curé of Contrexeville (Paris, 1859) one of the best monographs which have been published on a monastic subject.

[153] *Romarici Mons.* But the abbey of Remiremont bears, in early documents, the name of *Monasterium Habendense.* This first monastery, built by Amatus upon the *Holy Mount*, was destroyed by the Huns. Re-established by the Emperor Louis III. beyond the Moselle and at the foot of the mountain, it became the nucleus of the existing town of Remiremont. The nuns were afterwards changed into noble canonesses, but always under the rule of St. Benedict. The abbess alone took the perpetual vows. The others could marry and return to the world. The proofs of nobility required before a candidate was admitted were so difficult that Remiremont was reckoned among the most illustrious chapters in Europe. To mark the difference between the different chapters of women in that age of decay, when the most venerable institutions of Catholic antiquity had lost the true meaning of their existence, they were named thus: the *ladies* of Remiremont, the *chambermaids* of Epinal, and the *laundresses* of Poussey: and that, notwithstanding that eight paternal and eight maternal quarterings were necessary for admission to Poussey. The abbess of Remiremont ranked as a princess of the Holy Empire from the time of Rudolph of Hapsburg.

influx of the nuns and the liberality of the Austrasian kings and nobles. Clotaire II. gave, at one time, the enormous sum of two hundred pieces of gold to the foundation of his ancient leude. Remiremont soon became for women what Luxeuil already was for men. The number of nuns permitted the *Laus perennis* to be organized by means of seven choirs, who alternately sang the praises of God in seven different churches or chapels. The fervor and regularity of all these virgins procured to the site occupied by their community the name of the *Holy Mount*, which it retained for some centuries.

Romaric, his daughter, and grandchildren.

Romaric directed it for thirty years. Before entering Luxeuil he had been married, and had three daughters; the two younger took the veil in the monastery of their father. The eldest, who had married without the consent of Romaric, and without a fortune, attempted to reclaim a portion of her paternal inheritance. She sent to her father her first child, a girl, hoping that the heart of Romaric would soften, and that he would bestow on his grandchild what he had refused to his daughter. The grandfather received her with joy, but did not send her back, and had her trained by the nuns, whose abbess she afterwards became. Then the mother, having had a son, sent him, before he was even baptized, to his grandfather, still in the hope that he would make him his heir. But Romaric acted with him as with his sister; he kept the child, and left him no other inheritance than that of the abbatial dignity with which he was invested.[154]

Double monasteries.

For there were two monasteries at Remiremont, one for monks and the other for nuns, connected with each other, but with a special superior for each of the communities. This was also the case at Jouarre, at Faremoutier, and wherever there were great foundations for women. Sometimes, as at Remiremont, the abbot had the supreme government; sometimes, as we shall see in Belgium, it was the abbess. The prohibition of the Council of Agde, in 506,[155] had, by necessity of things, fallen into disuse.

[154] "Expers hæreditariæ sortis absque patris consilio nupsit. . . . Sperans hoc modo elicere, quatenus hæreditatis pignus, quod sibi jure competebat hæreditario, restitueret puellæ. . . . Puerulum, quem post paulo pepererat, transmisit avo baptisandum, atque ad relictæ possessionis hæredem constituendum." — *Vita S. Adelphii*, ap. BOLLAND., t. iii. Sept., p. 818. "Nupsit nobilissimo splendidissimoque cuidam e Sicambrorum gente, cui Bithylinus nomen." — *Ibid.*, p. 811.

[155] "Monasteria puellarum longius a monasteriis monachorum, aut propter insidias diaboli, aut propter oblocutiones hominum, collocentur." — Can. 28.

The ranks of that feminine clergy, whose sacrifice the Church praises in the liturgy, increased every day.[156] It was necessary at once to protect and guide the weakness of these spouses of Christ who had taken refuge in forests and deserts, surrounded by wild beasts or barbarous and semi-pagan tribes. In the seventh century, and still later, the Church did nothing but encourage that custom which disappeared in due time, and even before any scandal had pointed out the unsuitable nature of the arrangement, in those monastic annals where everything is spoken out with bold and minute frankness. To systematic enemies of Catholic discipline, and to sceptics who may be tempted to smile, let us recall the touching and noble spectacle, so much admired and praised a thousand years after the foundation of Remiremont, given by the solitaries of Port-Royal during their sojourn near the nuns of that celebrated valley. And a voice, which cannot be suspected, elsewhere bears witness thus: "The vicinity of the monasteries," says M. Michelet, "the abuses of which have certainly been exaggerated, created between the brethren and sisters a happy emulation of study as well as of piety. The men tempered their seriousness by sharing in the moral graces of the women. They, on their side, took from the austere asceticism of the men a noble flight towards divine things. Both, according to the noble expression of Bossuet, helped each other *to climb the rugged path.*" [157]

This monastery of men, also placed under the rule of Columbanus by its two founders, was not the less on that account unfavorable to the spirit of the Irish rule. When Agrestinus attempted to organize among the numerous disciples of Columbanus an insurrection against the traditions of their master and the discipline of Luxeuil, he fell back upon Remiremont after he had been overcome by Eustace at the Council of Mâcon and repulsed by Burgundofara at Faremoutier. He was well received by Amatus and Romaric, who were already biased against the abbot of Luxeuil, and still better by their monks, who showed themselves unanimous in their repugnance to the institutions of Columbanus.[158] Fatal and numerous accidents, of which more than fifty of the

Success of the schismatic Agrestin at Remiremont.

623-625.

[156] "Ora pro populo, interveni pro clero, intercede pro devoto femineo sexu."

[157] Michelet, *Mémoire sur l'Education des Femmes au Moyen Age.* Read at the meeting of the Five Academies, May 2, 1838.

[158] "In contemptum regulæ B. Columbani. . . . Cum ad hoc jam omnes

Religious were victims, some torn by mad wolves or struck by lightning, others urged to suicide or violent deaths, were necessary to lead them back. All these misfortunes, happening in such rapid succession, appeared warnings from on high, and the disgraceful death of Agrestinus himself opened their eyes completely. Amatus and Romaric returned into communion with Eustace. The former continued to watch over the administration of the two houses, though he had given up their immediate direction. He was especially solicitous to root out from among these spiritual children the sin of individual property. "My dear and gentle brother," he said one day to a monk who passed near him, "I much fear that the cunning of the enemy has persuaded thee to something against the rule." And as the monk protested against this, Amatus took between his fingers the edge of the delinquent's cowl precisely at the spot where he had sewn in a piece of money with the intention of reserving it for his personal use. "What have you here, dear brother?" The monk, falling on his knees, cried, "Woe is me! I confess that I have stolen the third part of a denier of gold." According to the monastic spirit, it was a theft made from the community; but Amatus pardoned the culprit, saying to him, "Let him that stole steal no more." He condemned himself to make a public confession before his death, no doubt in recollection of his weakness towards the schismatic Agrestinus, and his struggles against his abbot at Luxeuil.[159] However, Amatus himself had retired into a grotto, closed up by a projecting rock, so low and so narrow that it could scarcely contain him. As in the case of St. Benedict at Subiaco, a monk lowered down to him, by a cord from the top of the rock, the morsel of bread and glass of water on which he lived. This severe penance was not enough for him. When he was dying, upon a bed of ashes, he had the letter of the Pope St. Leo to St. Flavian, which contains a clear and complete exposition of Catholic doctrine upon the Trinity and Incarnation, read to him, as a last and solemn protest against every germ of schism.

Penitence and death of Amatus.

September 13, 627.

adspirarent ut contemptus pristinarum assentatores forent institutionum." — JONAS, *Vita S. Eustasii*, c. 13–15.

[159] "Frater mi . . . vereor, dulcissime meus. . . . Oram cucullæ tenens, utroque digito hinc inde complexus consutum infra trientem reperit. . . . Hoc ergo quod habes, frater mi? . . . Heu mihi! tremissem furatus sum. . . . Quoniam de quibusdam factis meis me oportet pœnitere et libet." — *Vita S. Amati*, c. 21–23.

As for Romaric, who long survived both him and the pious Mactefleda, the first ruler of the sisters, he took all necessary precautions to insure the election of the abbess of his beloved monastery exclusively by her own community, and that this entire foundation should rely in temporal matters only on the king, and in spiritual affairs only on the pope. At the end of his life the old warrior regained his courage and the political part he had played of old. He had known, in the palace of the kings of Austrasia, the great and pious Pepin de Landen, whose son, Grimoald, had become all-powerful, as minister under King Sigisbert, and threatened beforehand the rights and even the life of the young heir of this prince. Prophetically warned of the projects entertained by the son of his old friend, Romaric, despite his age and presentiment of approaching death, descended from his mountain and took his way to the palace which he had not seen for thirty years, to intimate the perils of the country to the king and nobles. He arrived in the middle of the night: Grimoald, on being informed of his approach, went to meet him with lighted torches. At sight of his father's friend, of this old man of God, with his elevated and imposing height and solemn aspect, he thought he saw, says the historian, a supernatural apparition, and trembled. However, he embraced him with great respect. What passed between them has not been recorded. It is only known that Grimoald overwhelmed the old abbot with presents, and promised to do all that he wished. Three days after, Romaric, who had returned to the monastery, visited for the last time, on his way, the cultivated lands which belonged to it, was dead, and buried beside Amatus, the master and friend who had led him to God by *the rugged path*.[160]

Romaric and the minister Grimoald.

December 8, 653.

To complete this rapid glance over the extension of the great institute of Columbanus in Frankish Gaul in the seventh century, it has yet to be shown how, after having spread through both the Burgundies and Austrasia, and gaining Armorica, where the British Celts naturally adopted with cordiality the work of the Irish Celt,[161] it extended over Neu-

[160] "Ad principis palatium . . . ut regi seu proceribus suis de periculo eorum vel casu venturo cavenda nuntiaret. . . . Vir magnificus Grimoaldus subregulus. . . . Surgens cum facibus accensis . . . adspiciensque hominem Dei miræ magnitudinis, nescio quid tanquam angelicum seu cœleste signum se super eum videsse contremuit. . . . Indeque remeans rura monasterii circuivit." — *Vita S. Romarici*, c. 11.

[161] La Borderie, *Discours sur les Saints de Bretagne*, p. 23. However, few direct references to this adoption of the Columbanic rule by Armorican monasteries are to be found.

stria, beyond the Loire, and as far as Aquitaine ;[162] and for that purpose the foundation of Solignac, in Limousin, by St. Eligius, must be specially told. It took place soon after the Council of Mâcon. Its illustrious founder, who had visited the principal monasteries in Gaul and had perceived that monastic order was nowhere else observed as it was in Luxeuil,[163] declared his desire to conform it absolutely to the plan and rule of the model abbey which he found in the Vosges, and to which he placed it in direct subordination. But this great man belongs still more to the history of France than to that of the rule of Luxeuil. With him we touch upon a new phase of the Merovingian royalty, as with the apostles of Morinia we are brought in contact with the conversion of Belgium, and with the founder of Remiremont approach the accession and preponderance of the Pepins. New scenes open before us. To enter them, we must leave Luxeuil and Columbanus, of whom, however, we shall find elsewhere many a luminous and important trace.

St. Eligius founds Solignac upon the model of Luxeuil. — 631.

But before closing this chapter of our narrative, it is necessary to establish a result as unforeseen as undeniable. It seems that everything in the history we have just related ought to have secured the lasting preponderance of the rule and institute of Columbanus in the countries governed by the Franks. A popularity so great and legitimate, the constant favor of the Merovingian kings, the generous sympathy of the Burgundian and Austrasian nobility, the virtues and miracles of so many saints, the immense and perpetually renewed ramifications of Luxeuil and its offspring, all should have contributed to establish the ascendency of a monastic law originated upon the soil of Gaul, and extended by representatives so illustrious ; — all ought to have procured it a preference over that Italian rule, which was older, it is true, but the modest beginnings and obscure progress of which in Gaul have escaped the notice of history. This, however, was not the case. On the contrary, the rule of Columbanus was gradually eclipsed, and the rule of Benedict was introduced and triumphed everywhere, while still we cannot instance a sin-

Why was the rule of St. Columbanus rejected, and replaced by that of St. Benedict ?

[162] See the *Vita S. Eustasii*, by Jonas, for the five monasteries built in Berry and Nivernais, immediately after the Council of Mâcon, *ex regula B. Columbani*.

[163] See the passage quoted, p. 589. S. Audoeni, *Vita S. Eligii*, book i. c. 21.

gle man above the ordinary mark, a single celebrated saint, who could have contributed to that surprising victory, by his personal influence, throughout the whole period which we have surveyed. This victory was complete half a century after the death of the founder of Luxeuil, and amid the daily successes and increasing popularity of his disciples. Among those disciples themselves, some of the first and nearest to his heart, such as his godson Donatus, had begun to combine the Benedictine precepts with his. The two monasteries which he had himself originated and dwelt in, Luxeuil and Bobbio,[164] under his own immediate successors, suffered or accepted its sway, and extended it through their colonies. The illustrious Eligius, while he formed his Limousin foundation in exact imitation of Luxeuil, took care to specify in its charter that the monks were to follow at the same time the rules of both the blessed fathers Benedict and Columbanus.[165] The same stipulation is found of more and more frequent recurrence in deciding what order was to be adopted in the colonies of Luxeuil.[166] In this great monastic enlistment, which was carried on among the flower of the Gallo-Frank population during the whole of the seventh century, it was Columbanus who raised the recruits and set them out on the march; but it was Benedict who disciplined them, and gave them the flag and the watchword. Where Columbanus sowed, it was Benedict who reaped. The Benedictine rule was gradually and everywhere placed side by side with that of Columbanus, then substituted for his, until at length the latter dwindled further and further into distance, like an antique and respectable memory, from which life had ebbed away.

At Autun, in 670, in the heart of that Burgundy of

[164] Mabillon, *Præfat. in IV. Sæc.* We have already said that Mabillon goes so far as to assert that Columbanus himself introduced the Benedictine rule at Bobbio, but without furnishing the least proof of his assertion.

[165] "Ea tamen conditione ut vos vel successores vestri tramitem religionis sanctissimorum virorum Luxoviensis monasterii consequamini, et regulam beatissimorum Patrum Benedicti et Columbani firmiter teneatis."

[166] Particularly at Hautvilliers, Bèze, Maurmunster, Corbie, and at the *Monasterium Fossatense*, near Paris, since so celebrated as St. Maur-les-Fosses. In a charter of 641, the nuns of the latter house are described as living "sub regula S. Benedicti ad modum et similitudinem monasterii Luxoviensis." — *Annal. Benedict.*, lib. xii. c. 58. See also the charter of St. Amand for the monastery of Barisy, near Laon: "Ubi cœnobium *sub regula Domini Benedicti seu Domni Columbani* constituere inchoavimus." — Ap. Act. SS. O. S. B., t. ii. p. 1044; and that of the Bishop of Châlons for Montier-en-Der: "Si tepide egerunt . . . *secundum regulam sancti Benedicti vel Domni Columbani* corrigantur." — *Ibid.*, t. iii. p. 570.

which Columbanus seemed destined to be the monastic legislator, in a council of fifty-four bishops, held by St. Leger, who had himself lived at Luxeuil, six canons were given forth exclusively relative to monastic discipline; in which the observation and fulfilment, in all their fulness, of the precepts of the canons of the Church and the rule of St. Benedict are enjoined upon all the Religious; and the Council adds: "If these are legitimately and fully observed by the abbots and monasteries, the number of the monks will always increase by the grace of God, and the whole world will be saved from the contagion of sin by their incessant prayers." [167] The Gallo-Frank Church thus proclaimed its unqualified adhesion to the rule which St. Maur had brought from Latium a hundred and twenty years before: the great Irish monk had scarcely been fifty years dead, and already no mention is made either of his rule or his person.

The Council of Autun recognizes no rule but that of St. Benedict.

How can we explain this complete and universal substitution of Benedictine influence for that of the Hibernian legislator, even in his own foundations; and that, we repeat, without the appearance of any mind of the highest stamp exclusively devoted to the traditions of Monte Cassino? Must it be attributed to the individual and national spirit, from which Columbanus either could not or would not completely separate himself? Was this the hidden vice which consumed the vitality of his work? No, certainly; for if this powerful individuality had inspired the least dislike, he could not have attracted, during his life, nor after his death, that myriad of disciples, more numerous, and especially more illustrious, than all those of Benedict.

We must then seek the reason of his failure elsewhere, and it is to be found, in our opinion, in the much closer and more intimate union of the Benedictine Rule with the authority of the Roman See. We have proved that neither in Columbanus nor among his disciples and offspring, was there any hostility to the Holy See, and we have quoted proofs of the respect of the popes for his memory. Nor had Benedict, any more than Columbanus, either sought or obtained during his

[167] "De abbatibus vero vel monachis ita observare convenit, ut quidquid canonicus ordo vel regula S. Benedicti edocet, et implere, et custodire in omnibus debeant: si enim hæc omnia fuerint legitime apud abbates et monasteria, et numerus monachorum Deo propitio augebitur, et mundus omnis, per eorum orationes assiduas, malis carebit contagiis." The date of this Council is not certain: some place it in 665, others in 670 or 674. Mabillon inclines towards this latter date.

lifetime the sovereign sanction of the Papacy for his institution. But long after his death, and at the very time when Columbanus was busied in planting his work in Gaul, the saint and the man of genius who occupied the chair of St. Peter, Gregory the Great, had spontaneously impressed the seal of supreme approbation upon the Benedictine Rule. This adoption of the work Gregory had preluded by the celebration of its author in those famous *Dialogues*, the popularity of which was to be so great in all Catholic communities. The third successor of Gregory, Boniface IV., in a council held at Rome in 610, and by a famous decree which we reproach ourselves for not having mentioned before, had condemned those who, moved more by jealousy than charity, held that the monks, being dead to the world and living only for God, were by that reason rendered unworthy and incapable of exercising the priesthood and administering the sacraments. The decree of this Council recognizes the power of binding and loosing in monks lawfully ordained, and, to confound the foolish assumptions of their adversaries, quotes the example of St. Gregory the Great, who had not been kept back from the Supreme See by his monastic profession, and of many others who under the monastic frock had already worn the pontifical ring. But it especially appeals to the authority of Benedict, whom it describes as "the venerable legislator of the monks," and who had interdicted them only from interference in secular affairs.[168] It proclaims anew, and on the most solemn occasion, that the Rule of Benedict was the supreme monastic law. It impresses a new sanction upon all the prescriptions of him whom another pope, John IV., the same who exempted Luxeuil from episcopal authority, called, thirty years later, the *abbot of the city of Rome*.[169]

Decree of the Council of Rome in its favor.

610.

Thus adopted and honored by the Papacy, and identified in some sort with the authority of Rome itself, the influence of the rule of St. Benedict progressed with the progress of the Roman Church. I am aware that up to the seventh century, the intervention of the popes in the affairs of the Church in

It is identified with the authority of the Holy See, and thus becomes the supreme rule.

[168] "Sunt nonnulli stulti dogmatis. . . . Apostolici compar sedis B. Gregorius monachico cultu pollens ad summum nullatenus apicem conscenderet. Alii quoque sanctissimi pretiosissimo monachorum habitu fulgentes nequaquam annulo pontificali suborbarentur. — Neque Benedictus monachorum præceptor almificus." — Coletti *Concil.*, t. vi. p. 1355.

[169] "Et haud procul a nostris temporibus Benedicti abbatis istius Romæ hujus urbis." — Charter of exemption given to a female monastery at the request of King Clovis II. *Annal. Benedict.*, t. ii., Append., p. 688.

France was much less sought and less efficacious than in after ages; but it was already undoubtedly sovereign, and more than sufficient to win the assent of all to a specially Roman institution.

Without weakening the foregoing argument, another explanation might be admitted for the strange course of things which, in the space of a single century, eclipsed the rule and name of Columbanus, and changed into Benedictine monasteries all the foundations due to the powerful missionary impulse of the Irish Apostle. The cause which produced in Western Christendom the supremacy of St. Benedict's institute over that of his illustrious rival, was most likely the same which made the Rule of St. Basil to prevail over all the other monastic Rules of the East — namely, its moderation, its prudence, and the more liberal spirit of its government. When the two legislatures of Monte Cassino and of Luxeuil met together, it must have been manifest that the latter exceeded the natural strength of man, in its regulations relating to prayer, to food, and to penal discipline, and, above all, in its mode of government. St. Benedict had conquered by the strength of practical sense, which in the end always wins the day.

One of those great rivers, which, like the Moselle or the Saone, have their source near Luxeuil itself, offers a meet symbol of the fate which awaited the work of St. Columbanus. We see it first spring up, obscure and unknown, from the foot of the hills; we see it then increase, extend, grow into a broad and fertilizing current, watering and flowing through vast and numerous provinces. We expect it to continue indefinitely its independent and beneficent course. But, vain delusion! Lo, another stream comes pouring onward from the other extremity of the horizon, to attract and to absorb its rival, to draw it along, to swallow up even its name, and, replenishing its own strength and life by these captive waters, to pursue alone and victorious its majestic course towards the ocean. Thus did the current of Columbanus's triumphant institution sink into the forgotten tributary of that great Benedictine stream, which henceforward flowed forth alone to cover Gaul and all the West with its regenerating tide.

BOOK VIII.

CHRISTIAN ORIGIN OF THE BRITISH ISLES.

"Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." — ISAIAH liv. 2, 3.

CHAPTER I.

GREAT BRITAIN BEFORE THE CONVERSION OF THE SAXONS.

Character of the English nation. — Heir of the Romans, it borrows from them only their grandeur and their pride. — From whence comes its religion? From popes and monks. — England has been made by monks, as France by bishops. — The heroes who resisted the Empire: Caractacus, Boadicea, Galgacus. — No trace of Roman law exists in Britain; all is Celtic or Teutonic. — Britain the first of the Western nations which could live without Rome, and the first which could resist the barbarians. — Ravages of the Picts. — Gildas. — Arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain. — Their destruction of primitive Christianity. — Origin of British Christianity. — The proto-martyr St. Alban. — Ravages of the Saxons. — Liberal aid given by the Papacy. — Mission of Palladius, and afterwards of St. Germain of Auxerre. — Battle of the Hallelujah. — The Briton Ninian becomes the apostle of the Southern Picts. — His establishment at Whitehorn. — Ferocity of the Caledonians. — His death. — Glastonbury: legend of Joseph of Arimathea: tomb of King Arthur. — Position of Britain between the years 450 and 550. — The four different races: the Picts, the Scots, the Britons, and the Saxons. — From whence did the light of the Gospel come to the Saxons?

In modern Europe, at a distance of seven leagues from France, within sight of our northern shores, there exists a nation whose empire is more vast than that of Alexander or the Cæsars, and which is at once the freest and most powerful, the richest and most manful, the boldest and best regulated

in the world. No other nation offers so instructive a study, so original an aspect, or contrasts so remarkable. At once liberal and intolerant, pious and inhuman, loving order and serenity as much as noise and commotion, it unites a superstitious respect for the letter of the law with the most unlimited practice of individual freedom. Busied more than any other in all the arts of peace, yet nevertheless invincible in war, and sometimes rushing into it with frantic passion — too often destitute of enthusiasm, but incapable of failure — it ignores the very idea of discouragement or effeminacy. Sometimes it measures its profits and caprices as by the yard, sometimes it takes fire for a disinterested idea or passion. More changeable than any in its affections and judgments, but almost always capable of restraining and stopping itself in time, it is endowed at once with an originating power which falters at nothing, and with a perseverance which nothing can overthrow. Greedy of conquests and discoveries, it rushes to the extremities of the earth, yet returns more enamored than ever of the domestic hearth, more jealous of securing its dignity and everlasting duration. The implacable enemy of bondage, it is the voluntary slave of tradition, of discipline freely accepted, or of a prejudice transmitted from its fathers. No nation has been more frequently conquered; none has succeeded better in absorbing and transforming its conquerors. In no other country has Catholicism been persecuted with more sanguinary zeal; at the present moment none seems more hostile to the Church, and at the same time none has greater need of her care; no other influence has been so greatly wanting to its progress; nothing has left within its breast a void so irreparable; and nowhere has a more generous hospitality been lavished upon our bishops and priests and religious exiles. Inaccessible to modern storms, this island has been an inviolable asylum for our exiled fathers and princes, not less than for our most violent enemies.

The sometimes savage egotism of these islanders, and their too often cynical indifference to the sufferings and bondage of others, ought not to make us forget that there, more than anywhere else, man belongs to himself and governs himself. It is there that the nobility of our nature has developed all its splendor and attained its highest level. It is there that the generous passion of independence, united to the genius of association and the constant practice of self-government, have produced those miracles of fierce energy, of dauntless

vigor, and obstinate heroism, which have triumphed over seas and climates, time and distance, nature and tyranny, exciting the perpetual envy of all nations, and among the English themselves a proud enthusiasm.[1]

Loving freedom for itself, and loving nothing without freedom, this nation owes nothing to her kings, who have been of importance only by her and for her. Upon herself alone weighs the formidable responsibility of her history. After enduring, as much or more than any European nation, the horrors of political and religious despotism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, she has been the first and the only one among them to free herself from oppression forever. Re-established in her ancient rights, her proud and steadfast nature has forbidden her since then to give up into any hands whatsoever, her rights and destinies, her interests and free will. She is able to decide and act for herself, governing, elevating, and inspiring her great men, instead of being seduced or led astray by them, or worked upon for their advantage. This English race has inherited the pride as well as the grandeur of that Roman people of which it is the rival and the heir; I mean the true Romans of the Republic, not the base Romans subjugated by Augustus. Like the Romans towards their tributaries, it has shown itself ferocious and rapacious to Ireland, inflicting upon its victim, even up to recent times, that bondage and degradation which it repudiates with horror for itself. Like ancient Rome, often hated, and too often worthy of hate, it inspires its most favorable judges rather with admiration than with love. But, happier than Rome, after a thousand years and more, it is still young and fruitful. A slow, obscure, but uninterrupted progress has created for England an inexhaustible reservoir of strength and life. In her veins the sap swells high to-day,

[1] This enthusiasm has never been better expressed than in those lines which Johnson, the great English moralist of last century, repeated with animation on his return from his visit to the monastic island of Iona, the cradle of British Christianity, whither we are shortly to conduct our readers:

"Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state,
With daring aims irregularly great;
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of human kind pass by;
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashioned, fresh from nature's hand,
Fierce in their native hardiness of soul,
True to imagined right, above control;
While even the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
And learns to venerate himself as man."

GOLDSMITH, *The Traveller.*

and will swell to-morrow. Happier than Rome, in spite of a thousand false conclusions, a thousand excesses, a thousand stains, she is of all the modern races, and of all Christian nations, the one which has best preserved the three fundamental bases of every society which is worthy of man — the spirit of freedom, the domestic character, and the religious mind.

How, then, has this nation, in which a perfectly pagan pride survives and triumphs, and which has nevertheless remained, even in the bosom of error, the most religious[2] of all European nations, become Christian? How and by what means has Christianity struck root so indestructibly in her soil? This is surely a question of radical interest among all the great questions of history, and one which takes new importance and interest when it is considered that upon the conversion of England there has depended, and still depends, the conversion of so many millions of souls. English Christianity has been the cradle of Christianity in Germany; from the depths of Germany, missionaries formed by the Anglo-Saxons have carried the faith into Scandinavia and among the Slaves; and even at the present time, either by the fruitful expansion of Irish orthodoxy, or by the obstinate zeal of the Protestant propaganda, Christian societies, which speak English and live like Englishmen, come into being every day throughout North America, in the two Indies, in immense Australia, and in the Isles of the Pacific. The Christianity of nearly half of the world flows, or will flow, from the fountain which first burst forth upon British soil.

It is possible to answer this fundamental question with the closest precision. No country in the world has received the Christian faith more directly from the Church of Rome, or more exclusively by the ministration of monks.

If France has been made by bishops, as has been said by a great enemy of Jesus Christ, it is still more true that Christian England has been made by monks. Of all the countries of Europe it is this that has been the most deeply furrowed by the monastic plough. The monks, and the monks alone, have introduced, sowed, and cultivated Christian civilization in this famous island.

From whence came these monks? From two very distinct

[2] This may be considered a surprising statement. It expresses, however, a conviction founded upon personal comparisons and studies made during nearly forty years in all the countries of Europe except Russia. It agrees, besides, with the results ascertained by one of the most conscientious and clear-sighted observers of our time, M. Le Play.

sources — from Rome and Ireland. British Christianity was produced by the rivalry, and sometimes by the conflict, of the monastic missionaries of the Roman and of the Celtic Church.

But before its final conversion, which was due, above all, to a Pope and to monks produced by the Benedictine order, Great Britain possessed a primitive Christianity, obscure yet incontestable, the career and downfall of which are worthy of a rapid survey.

Heroic resistance of Britain to the Roman Empire.

Of all the nations conquered by Rome, the Britons were those who resisted her arms the longest, and borrowed the least from her laws and manners. Vanquished for a moment, but not subdued, by the invincible Cæsar, they forced the executioner of the Gauls, and the destroyer of Roman freedom, to leave their shores, without having established slavery there. Less happy under his unworthy successors, reduced to a province, and given up as a prey to avarice and luxury, to the ferocity of usurers,[3] of procurators, and of imperial lieutenants, they long maintained a proud and noble attitude, which contrasted with the universal bondage. *Jam domiti ut pareant, nondum ut serviant.*[4] To be subjects and not to be slaves — it is the first and the last word of British history.

Even under Nero, the Britons laughed at the vile freedmen whom the Cæsars imposed upon the dishonored universe as administrators and magistrates.[5] Long before it was beaten down and revivified by the successive invasions of three Teutonic races — the Saxons, Danes, and Normans — the noble Celtic race had produced a succession of remarkable personages who, thanks to Tacitus, shine with an imperishable light amidst the degradation of the world: the glorious prisoner Caractacus, the British Vercingetorix, who spoke to the emperor in language worthy of the finest days of the Republic — "Because it is your will to enslave us, does it follow that all the world desires your yoke?"[6] and Boadicea, the heroic queen, exhibiting her scourged body and her outraged daughters to excite the indignant patriotism of the Britons, betrayed by fortune but saved by history; and,

[3] Such as Seneca himself, according to Dion Cassius.

[4] Tacitus, *Agricola*, c. 13.

[5] "Hostibus irrisui fuit, apud quos flagrante etiam tum libertate, nondum cognita libertorum potentia erat: mirabanturque, quod dux, et exercitus tanti belli confector, servitiis obedirent." — *Annal.*, xiv. 39.

[6] "Num, si vos omnibus imperitare vultis, sequitur ut omnes servitutem accipiant?" — *Ibid.*, xii. 37.

last of all, Galgacus, whose name Tacitus had made immortal, by investing him with all the eloquence which conscience and justice could bestow upon an honest and indignant man, in that speech which we all know by heart, and which sounded the onset for that fight in which the most distant descendants of Celtic liberty were to cement with their blood the insurmountable rampart of their mountain independence.[7]

It was thus that Britain gave a prelude to the glorious future which freedom has created for herself, through so many tempests and eclipses, in the island which has finally become her sanctuary and indestructible shelter.

The civil code of Rome, which weighs heavily still, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, upon France, Spain, Italy, and Germany, reigned without doubt in Britain during the period of Roman occupation; but it disappeared with the reign of the Cæsars. Its unwholesome roots never wound around, stifled, or poisoned the vigorous shoots of civil, political, and domestic freedom. The same thing may be said of all other similar influences. Neither in the institutions nor in the monuments of Britain has imperial Rome left any trace of hideous domination. Its language and its habits have escaped her influence as well as its laws. There, all that is not Celtic is Teutonic. It was reserved for Catholic Rome, the Rome of the Popes, to leave an ineffaceable impression upon this famous island, and there to reclaim, for the immortal majesty of the Gospel, that social influence which everywhere else has been disputed or diverted from it by the fatal inheritance which the Rome of the Cæsars left to the world.

At the same time, after having been the last of the Western nations to yield to the Roman yoke, Britain was the first to free herself from it; she was the first capable of throwing off the imperial authority, and showing the world that it was possible to do without an emperor. When the powerlessness of the empire against barbaric incursions had been demonstrated in Britain as elsewhere, the Britons were not false to themselves. The little national monarchies, the clans aristocratically organized, whose divisions had occasioned the triumph of the Roman invasion, reappeared under native chiefs. A kind of federation was constituted, and its leaders signified to the Emperor Honorius, in 410, by an embassy received at Ravenna, that henceforward Britain reckoned upon defending

Britain the first of Western nations which dispensed with Cæsar.

[7] "Initium libertatis totius Britanniæ. . . . Nos terrarum ac libertatis extremos."

and governing herself.[8] A great writer has already remarked, that of all the nations subdued by the Roman Empire it is the Britons alone whose struggle with the barbarians had a history — and the history of that resistance lasted two centuries. Nothing similar occurred at the same period, under the same circumstances, among the Italians, the Gauls, or the Spaniards, who all allowed themselves to be crushed and overthrown without resistance.[9]

At the same time, Britain herself had not passed with impunity through three centuries and a half of imperial bondage. As in Gaul, as in all the countries subjugated by the Roman Empire, dependence and corruption had ended by enervating, softening, and ruining the vigorous population. The sons to those whom Cæsar could not conquer, and who had struggled heroically under Claudius and Nero, soon began to think themselves incapable of making head against the barbarians, *amissa virtute pariter ac libertate.* They sought in vain the intervention of the Roman legions, which returned to the island on two different occasions, without succeeding in delivering or protecting it. At the same time, the barbarians who came to shake and overthrow the sway of the Cæsars in Britain, were not foreigners, as were the Goths in Italy and the Franks in Gaul. Those Caledonians who, under Galgacus, victoriously resisted Agricola, and who, under the new names of Scots and Picts, breached the famous ramparts erected against them by Antoninus and Severus, and resumed year after year their sanguinary devastations, wringing from Britain, overwhelmed and desolated by half a century of ravage, that cry of distress which is known to all — "The barbarians have driven us to the sea, the sea drives us back upon the barbarians. We have only the choice of being murdered or drowned;"[10] were nothing more than unsubdued tribes belonging to Britain herself.

418-424.

Ravages of the Picts.

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[8] "Romanum nomen tenens, legem abjiciens." — GILDAS, *De Excidio Britanniæ.* ZOSIME, *Hist. Novæ*, book vi. pp. 376, 381. Compare LINGARD, *History of England*, c. 1. AMÉDÉE THIERRY, *Arles et le Tyran Constantin*, p. 309.

[9] GUIZOT, *Essai sur l'Histoire de France*, p. 2. In Gaul only the Arvernes, the compatriots of Vercingetorix, had one noble inspiration, when Ecdicius compelled the Goths to raise the siege of Clermont in 471, but it was but a passing gleam in the night.

[10] "*Aetio ter consuli gemitus Britannorum.* Repellunt nos barbari ad mare, repellit mare ad barbaros. Inter hæc oriuntur duo genera funerum: aut jugulamur aut mergimur."

Arrival of the Anglo-Saxons.

Everybody knows also how imprudently the Britains accepted the assistance against the Picts, of the warlike and maritime race of Anglo-Saxons, and how, themselves not less cruel nor less formidable than the Picts, those allies, becoming the conquerors of the country, founded there a new power, or, to speak more justly, a new nationality, which has victoriously maintained its existence through all subsequent conquests and revolutions. These warriors were an offshoot from the great Germanic family — as were also, according to general opinion, the Britons themselves — and resembled the latter closely in their institutions and habits; which did not, however, prevent the native population from maintaining against them, during nearly two centuries, a heroic, although in the end useless, resistance.[11] The Anglo-Saxons, who were entirely strangers to Roman civilization, took no pains to preserve or re-establish the remains of the imperial rule. But in destroying the dawning independence of the Britons, in driving back into the hilly regions of the west that part of the population which was beyond the reach of the long knives from which they derived their name,[12] the pagan invaders overthrew, and for a time annihilated, upon the blood-stained soil of Great Britain, an edifice of a majesty very different from that of the Roman Empire, and of endurance more steadfast than that of Celtic nationality — the edifice of the Christian religion.

Origin of Christianity in Britain.

It is known with certainty that Christianity existed in Britain from the second century of the Christian era, but nothing is positively known as to the origin or organization of the primitive church; according to Tertullian, however, she had penetrated into Caledonia beyond the limits of the Roman province.[13] She furnished her contingent of martyrs to the persecution of Diocletian, in the foremost rank among whom stood Alban, a young deacon, whose tomb, at a later date, was consecrated by one of the principal Anglo-Saxon monasteries. She appeared, immediately after the peace of the Church, in the persons of her bishops, at the first Western councils. And

314.

she survived the Roman domination, but only to fight for her footing inch by inch, and finally to fall back,

[11] This resistance has been nowhere so well described as by M. Arthur de la Borderie in the *Revue Bretonne* of 1864.

[12] *Sax*, knife, sword, in old German.

[13] "Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo vero subdita." — TERTUL., *Adv. Judæos*, c. 7.

with the last tribes of the Britons, before the Saxon invaders, after an entire century of efforts and sufferings, of massacres and profanations. During all this period, from one end of the isle to the other, the Saxons carried fire and sword and sacrilege, pulling down public buildings and private dwellings, devastating the churches, breaking the sacred stones of the altars, and murdering the pastors along with their flocks.[14]

Trials so cruel and prolonged necessarily disturbed the habitual communication between the Christians of Britain and the Roman Church; and this absence of intercourse occasioned in its turn the diversities of rites and usages, especially in respect to the celebration of Easter, which will be discussed further on. At present it is enough to state that the most attentive study of authentic documents reveals no doctrinal strife, no diversity of belief, between the British bishops and the Bishop of bishops at Rome. Besides, the Rome of the Popes was lavishing its lights and consolations upon its daughter beyond sea, at the very moment when the Rome of the Cæsars abandoned her to disasters which could never be repaired.

The British Church had become acquainted with the dangerous agitations of heresy even before she was condemned to her mortal struggle against Germanic paganism. Pelagius, the great heresiarch of the fifth century, the great enemy of grace, was born in her bosom. To defend herself from the contagion of his doctrines, she called to her aid the orthodox bishops of Gaul. Pope Celestin, who, about the same period, had sent the Roman deacon Palladius to be the first bishop of the Scots of Ireland, or of the Hebrides,[15] warned by the same Palladius

Mission of the deacon Palladius to the Scots, 421 or 431;

[14] "Accensus manibus paganorum ignis . . . ab orientali mare usque ad occidentale . . . totam prope insulæ perceuntis superficiem obtexit. Ruebant ædificia publica, simul et privata; passim sacerdotes inter altaria trucidabantur, præsules cum populis, sine ullo respectu honoris, ferro pariter et flammis absumebantur." — BEDA, *Hist. Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, book i. c. 15. Compare GILDAS, *De Excidio Britanniæ*. Opinions are divided as to the complete or partial destruction of the Britons in the districts conquered by the Saxons. Palgrave especially has questioned ordinary tradition upon this fact. However, the Saxon historians themselves have proved more than one case of complete extermination. The first Saxons established by Cerdic, founder of the kingdom of Wessex, in the Isle of Wight, destroyed the entire native population there. "Paucos Britones, ejusdem insulæ accolas, quos in ea invenire potuerunt . . . occiderunt: cæteri enim accolæ ejusdem insulæ ante aut occisi erant, aut exules aufugerant." — ASSER, p. 5, ap. LINGARD, i. 19. "Hoc anno (490) Ælla et Cissa obsederunt Andredescester (in Sussex) et interfecerunt omnes qui id incolerent, adeo ut ne unus Brito ibi superstes fuerit." — *Chron. Anglo-Sax.*, ad ann. 490, ed. Gibson.

[15] "Palladius ad Scotos in Christum credentes ordinatus a papa Celestino

and of the Bishop St. Germain of Auxerre against the Pelagians.

of the great dangers which threatened the faith in Britain, charged our great bishop of Auxerre, St. Germain, to go and combat there the Pelagian heresy. This prelate paid two visits to Britain, fortifying her in the orthodox faith and the love of celestial grace. Germain, who was accompanied the first time by the bishop of Troyes,[16] and the second by the bishop of Treves, employed at first against the heretics only the arms of persuasion. He preached to the faithful not only in the churches, but at cross-roads and in the fields. He argued publicly against the Pelagian doctors in presence of the entire population, assembled with their wives and children, who gave him the most absorbed attention.[17] The illustrious bishop, who had been a soldier in his youth, showed once more the bold ardor of his early profession in defence of the people whom he came to evangelize. At the head of his disarmed converts he marched against a horde of Saxons and Picts, who were leagued together against the Britons, and put them to flight by making his band repeat three times the cry *Hallelujah*, which the neighboring mountains threw back in echoes. This is the day known as the *Victory of the Hallelujah*.[18] It would have been well could he have preserved the victors from the steel of the barbarians as he succeeded in curing them of the poison of heresy; for after his visit Pe-

primus episcopus mittitur." — Prosper, *Chron. Consulare*, ad ann. 429. In another work this contemporary adds: "Et ordinato Scotis episcopo, dum Romanam insulam studet servare catholicam, fecit etiam barbaram Christianam." — *Lib. contra Collat.*, c. 14. But the small success of that mission, of which there is no mention even in the historic documents of Ireland, gives probability to the conjecture of M. Varin, who concludes that Palladius was charged solely with the care of the Scots already established in the Hebrides, and upon the western shores of Caledonia. This is the best place to mention a saint, venerated in the Church of Scotland as the disciple of Palladius, St. Ternan, described as archbishop of the Picts in the liturgical books of Aberdeen, which have made of St. Palladius († towards 450) a contemporary of St. Gregory the Great († 604). The memory of this saint has been brought again to light by the recent publication of a very curious liturgical relic, *Liber Ecclesiæ Beati Terrenani de Arbuthnott, seu Missale secundum usum Ecclesiæ Sancti Andrea in Scotia*, which we owe to Dr. Forbes, Anglican bishop of Brechin. But the article devoted to him by the Bollandists (*Act. SS.*, Junii, vol. ii. p. 533–35) does not put an end to the uncertainty which prevails as to his existence.

[16] St. Lupus, educated at the monastic school of Lerins, and so well known for his moral victory over Attila. — See *ante*, p. 276.

[17] "Divinus per eos sermo ferme quotidie, non solum in ecclesiis, verum etiam per trivia, per rura prædicabatur. . . . Immensa multitudo etiam cum conjugibus et liberis excita convenerat, et erat populus expectator et futurus judex . . . vix manus continet, judicium tamen clamore testatur." — Bede, i. 18.

[18] "Pugna alleluiatica."

lagianism appeared in Britain only to receive its deathblow at the synod of 519. By means of the disciples whom he trained, and who became the founders of the principal monasteries of Wales, it is to our great Gallican saint that Britain owes her first splendors of cenobitical life.

The celebrated bishop of Auxerre and his brethren were not the only dignified ecclesiastics to whom the Roman Church committed the care of preserving and propagating the faith in Britain. Towards the end of the fourth century, at the height of the Caledonian invasions, the son of a Breton chief, Ninias or Ninian, went to Rome to refresh his spirit in the fountains of orthodoxy and discipline, and, after having lived, prayed, and studied there in the school of Jerome and Damasus,[19] he received from Pope Siricius episcopal ordination. He conceived the bold thought, in returning to Britain, of meeting the waves of northern barbarians, who continued to approach ever nearer and more terrible, by the only bulwark which could subdue, by transforming them. He undertook to convert them to the Christian faith. The first thing he did was to establish the seat of his diocese in a distant corner of that midland district which lies between the two isthmuses that divide Great Britain into three unequal parts. This region, the possession of which had been incessantly disputed by the Picts, the Britons, and the Romans, had been reduced into a province, under the name of *Valentia*, only in the time of the Emperor Valentinianus, and comprehended all the land between the wall of Antoninus on the north, and the wall of Severus to the south. Its western extremity, the part of the British coast which lay nearest to Ireland, bore at that time the name of Galwidia or Galloway.[20] It forms a sort of peninsula, cut by the sea into several vast and broad promontories. It was on the banks of one of the bays thus formed, upon a headland from which the distant heights of Cumberland and the Isle of Man may be distinguished, that Ninian established his ecclesiastical headquarters by building a stone church. This kind of edifice, till then unknown in Britain, gained for the new cathedral and its adjoining monastery the name of *Candida Casa*, or White-

The Breton Ninian undertakes the conversion of the Picts.

370-394.

[19] "Nynia episcopo reverentissimo et sanctissimo viro, de natione Britonum, qui erat Romæ regulariter fidem et mysteria veritatis edoctus." — BEDE, iii. 4.

[20] This province, so called during all the middle ages, is represented in modern maps by the counties of Wigton and Kirkcudbright.

horn,[21] which is still its title. He consecrated the church to St. Martin, the illustrious apostle of the Gauls, to visit whom he had stopped at Tours, on his way back from Rome, and who, according to tradition, gave him masons capable of building a church in the Roman manner. The image of this holy man, who died at about the same time as Ninian established himself in his White House, the recollection of his courage, his laborious efforts against idolatry and heresy, his charity, full of generous indignation against all persecutors,[22] were well worthy to preside over the apostolic career of the new British bishop, and to inspire him with the self-devotion necessary for beginning the conversion of the Picts.

What traveller ever dreams in our days, while surveying western Scotland from the banks of the Solway to those of the Forth and Tay, passing from the gigantic capitals of industry to the fields fertilized by all the modern improvements of agriculture, meeting everywhere the proofs and productions of the most elaborate civilization, — who dreams nowadays of the obstacles which had to be surmounted before this very country could be snatched from barbarism? It is but too easy to forget what its state must have been when Ninian became its first missionary and bishop. Notwithstanding many authors, both sacred and profane — Dion and Strabonius, St. John Chrysostom and St. Jerome — have emulated each other in painting the horrible cruelty, the savage and brutal habits, of those inhabitants of North Britain, who, successively known under the name of Caledonians, *Meatæ*, *Attacoti*,[23] Scots, or Picts, were most probably nothing more than the descendants of the British tribes whom Rome had not been able to subdue.[24] All agree

Ferocity of the tribes evangelized by Ninian.

[21] *Horn*, *hern*, Saxon *ærn*, house. On an island near the shore there is still shown a little ruined church which is said to have been built by St. Ninian. The diocese which he founded disappeared after his death; but it was re-established by the Anglo-Saxons, as was also the community, to whom the famous Alcuin addressed a letter, entitled *Ad fratres S. Ninian in Candida Casa*. A new invasion of the Picts, this time from Ireland, destroyed for the second time the diocese of Galloway, which was re-established only in the twelfth century, under King David I. The beautiful ruins of this cathedral, which is comparatively modern, and was destroyed by the Presbyterians, are seen in the town of Whitehorn. The tomb of St. Ninian was always much frequented as a place of pilgrimage before the Reformation.

[22] See *ante*, p. 265.

[23] These *Attacoti*, to whom St. Jerome attributes morals and cruelties which will not bear description, inhabited, according to the general opinion, the picturesque district north of the Clyde, at present traversed by so many travellers, between Loch Lomond and Loch Fyne.

[24] Palgrave, *Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, vol. i. p.

in denouncing the incestuous intercourse of their domestic existence, and they have even been accused of cannibalism.[25] All express the horror with which the subjects of the Empire regarded those monsters in human form, who owed their final name of Picts to their habit of marching to battle naked, disclosing bodies tattooed, like those of the savage islanders of the Pacific, with strange devices and many colors. Notwithstanding, Ninian did not hesitate to trust himself in the midst of those enemies of faith and civilization. He, the son and representative of that British race which they had been accustomed for more than a century to massacre, spoil, and scorn, spent the twenty years that remained of his life in unwearied efforts to bring them into the light from on high, to lead them back from cannibalism to Christianity, and that at the very moment when the Roman Empire, as represented by Honorius, had abandoned Britain to its implacable destroyers.

Unfortunately there remain no authentic details of his mission,[26] no incident which recalls even distantly the clearly characterized mission of his successor, St. Columba, who became, a century and a half later, the apostle of the Northern Picts. We only know that he succeeded in 562-597. founding, in the midst of the Pictish race, a nucleus of Christianity which was never altogether destroyed; after which, crossing the limits which Agricola and Antoninus had set to the Roman sway at the time of its greatest splendor, he went, preaching the faith to the foot of those Grampians where the father-in-law of Tacitus gained his last unfruitful victory.[27] We know that his memory remains as a blessing among the descendants of the Picts and Scots, and that many churches consecrated under his invocation still preserve the recollection of that worship which was vowed to him by a grateful posterity;[28] and, finally, we know that, when above

419. This is true, however, only of the Picts, for the Scots unquestionably came from Ireland, the Scotia of the middle ages.

[25] See specially, St. Jerome, *in Jovinianum*, book ii.

[26] The Bollandists (*die* 16th September) do not admit the authenticity of the life of St. Ninian, written in the twelfth century by the holy abbot Ælred, which contains only such miracles as are to be found everywhere, without any specially characteristic feature.

[27] "Ipsi australes Picti qui infra eosdem montes habent sedes . . . relicto errore idololatriæ fidem veritatis acceperant prædicanti eis verbum Ninia episcopo." — Bede, iii. 4.

[28] Even beyond the Grampians, as far as the point where Glen Urquhart opens upon Loch Ness, and where St. Columba (see further on, Book IX. chap. iii.) went to visit an old Pict when dying, a ruined chapel is still to be

Death of Ninian, 432.

seventy, he returned to die in his monastery of the White House, after having passed the latter portion of his life, preparing himself for the judgment of God, in a cave still pointed out half way up a white and lofty cliff on the Galloway shore, upon which beat, without cease, the impetuous waves of the Irish sea.[29]

But in the primitive British Church, which was so cruelly afflicted by the heathens of the north and of the east, by the Picts and the Saxons, there were many other monasteries than that of Ninian at Whitehorn. All the Christian churches of the period were accompanied by cenobitical institutions, and Gildas, the most trustworthy of British annalists, leaves no doubt as to their existence in Britain.[30] But history has retained no detailed recollection of them. Out of Cambria, which will be spoken of hereafter, the only great monastic institution whose name has triumphed over oblivion belongs to legend rather than to history; but it has held too important a place in the religious traditions of the English people to be altogether omitted here. It was an age in which Catholic nations loved to dispute among themselves their priority and antiquity in the profession of the Christian faith, and to seek their direct ancestors among the privileged beings who had known, cherished, and served the Son of God during His passage through this life. They aspired by these legendary genealogies to draw themselves somehow closer to Calvary, and to be represented at the mysteries of the Passion. For this reason Spain has victoriously claimed as her apostle the son of Zebedee, the brother of St. John — that James whom Jesus led with him to the splendors of Tabor and to the anguish of the Garden of Olives. For this reason the south of France glories in tracing back its Christian origin to that family whose sorrows and love are inscribed in the Gospel — to Martha, who was the hostess of Jesus; to Lazarus, whom He raised up; to Mary Magdalene, who was the first witness of His own resurrection; to their miraculous journey from Judea to Provence; to the martyrdom of one, to the retreat of another in the Grotto of St. Baume; — admirable traditions, which the most solid learning of our own day has justified and consecrated.[31] England in other days, with much less

seen bearing the name of St. Ninian, from which it has been supposed that his mission passed the limit which has been ordinarily assigned to it.

[29] *Lives of the English Saints*, 1845, No. xiii. p. 131.

[30] *De Excidio Britanniæ*, pp. 43–45.

[31] See the great and learned work published by M. Faillon, Director of

foundation, loved to persuade herself that she owed the first seed of faith to Joseph of Arimathea, the noble and rich disciple[32] who laid the body of the Lord in the sepulchre where the Magdalene came to embalm it. The Britons, and after them the Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Normans, handed down from father to son the tradition that Joseph, flying the persecutions of the Jews, and carrying with him for all his treasure some drops of the blood of Jesus Christ, landed on the western coast of England with twelve companions; that he there found an asylum in a desert place surrounded by water,[33] and that he built and consecrated to the blessed Virgin a chapel, the walls of which were formed by entwined branches of willow, and the dedication of which Jesus Christ Himself did not disdain to celebrate. The same legend has been told since then of two great and famous monastic churches — that of St. Denis in France, and of Notre Dame des Ermites in Switzerland.[34] This spot, destined to become the first Christian sanctuary of the British Isles, was situated upon a tributary of the gulf into which the Severn falls. It after-

Legend of Joseph of Arimathea.

Abbey of Glastonbury.

Saint-Sulpice, under the title of *Monuments inédits sur l'Apostolat de Sainte Marie Madeleine en Provence.* Paris, 1848. Compare Bouche, *Défense de la Foi de Provence pour ses Saints Lazare, Maximin, Marthe, et Madeleine.*

[32] "Nobilis decurio." — S. Marc.

[33] Guillelmus Malmesburiensis, *Antiq. Glastonb.*, ap. Gale, *Script. Rur. Britann.*, vol. iii. p. 293. Compare Baronius, *Ann.*, ad ann. 48. Dugdale, *Monasticon*, vol. i. p. 2. The Bollandists and various other modern historians have taken much pains to refute this tradition. It is, however, repeated in the letter which some monks addressed to Queen Mary in 1553, to ask the re-establishment of their abbey (ap. Dugdale, vol. i. p. 9 of the new edition). In consequence of this tradition of Joseph of Arimathea, the ambassadors of England claimed precedence of those of France, Spain, and Scotland at the Councils of Pisa in 1409, of Constance in 1414, and, above all, of Bâle in 1434, because, according to them, the faith had been preached in France only by St. Denis, and later than the mission of Joseph of Arimathea. — Ussher, *De Prim. Eccl. Brit.*, p. 22.

[34] The following narrative, told by William of Malmesbury, shows to what extent this legend was accepted in France up to the twelfth century: —

"Monachus quidam Glastoniæ, Godefridus nomine (de cujus epistola hoc capitulum assumpsimus), tempore Henrice Blesensis abbatis Glastoniensis, cum in pago Parisiacensi apud Sanctum Dionysium moraretur; senior quidam ex monachis interrogavit eum: 'Quo genus? Unde domo?' Respondit: 'Normannum e Britanniæ monasterio, quod Glastingeia dicetur, monachum. — Papæ! inquit, an adhuc stat illa perpetuæ Virginis et misericordiæ Matris vestusta ecclesia? — Stat,' inquit. Tum ille lepido attactu caput G. Glastoniensis demulcens, diu silentio suspensum tenuit, ac sic demum ora resolvit: 'Hæc gloriosissimi martyris Dionysii ecclesia et illa, de qua te asseris eamdem privilegii dignitatem habent; ista in Gallia, illa in Britannia, uno eodem tempore exortæ, a summo et magno pontifice consecratæ. Uno tamen gradu illa supereminet: Roma etenim secunda vocatur.'"

wards received the name of Glastonbury; and such was, according to the unchangeable popular conviction, the origin of the great abbey of that name, which was afterwards occupied by monks of Irish origin.[35] This sanctuary of the primitive legends and national traditions of the Celtic race was besides supposed to enclose the tomb of King Arthur, who was, as is well known, the personification of the long and bloody resistance of the Britons to the Saxon invasion, the heroic champion of their liberty, of their language, and of their faith, and the first type of that chivalrous ideal of the middle ages in which warlike virtues were identified with the service of God and of our Lady.[36] Mortally wounded in one of these combats against the Saxons, which lasted three successive days and nights, he was carried to Glastonbury, died there, and was buried in secret, leaving to his nation the vain hope of seeing him one day reappear,[37] and to the whole of Christian Europe a legendary glory, a memory destined to emulate that of Charlemagne.

Thus poetry, history, and faith found a common home in the old monastery, which was for more than a thousand years one of the wonders of England, and which still remained erect, flourishing, and extensive as an entire town, up to the day when Henry VIII. hung and quartered the last abbot before the great portal of the confiscated and profaned sanctuary.[38]

[35] The curious collection entitled *Monasticon Anglicanum*, with the admirable plates of W. Hollar, which are to be found in the editions of the seventeenth century, should be consulted upon this famous abbey, as also upon all the others we may name. The bones of King Arthur were supposed to have been found at Glastonbury in the reign of Henry II., at the end of the twelfth century.

[36] See all the many poems on the *Round Table* in England, France, and Germany, and especially the three great poems entitled *Parceval*, *Titurel*, and *Lohengrin*, which turn upon the worship of the *Saint Graal* or *Sang Réal*, that is to say, the blood of our Lord, collected by Joseph of Arimathea, and preserved in the vase which Jesus Christ had used in the institution of the Eucharist.

[37] Compare Thierry, *Histoire de la Conquête d'Angleterre*, book i. p. 39. Lappenberg, vol. i. p. 104–107. M. de la Borderie, in his fine narrative of the struggle of the insular Britons with the Anglo-Saxons, has well distinguished the hyperbolical personage of legendary tradition from the real Arthur, chief of the league of Britons of the south and west, and conqueror of the Saxons, or rather of the Angles, in twelve battles.

[38] 14th May, 1539. — This martyr was accused of having withdrawn from the hand of the spoiler some part of the treasure of the abbey. He was pursued and put to death by the zeal of John Russell, founder of the house of Bedford, and one of the principal instruments of the tyranny of Henry VIII.

Position of Britain from 450 to 550.

But we return to the reality of history, and to the period which must now occupy our attention, that which extends from the middle of the fifth to that of the sixth century, the same age in which the Merovingians founded in Gaul the Frankish kingdom, so beloved by the monks; and St. Benedict planted upon Monte Cassino the cradle of the greatest of monastic orders. Great Britain, destined to become the most precious conquest of the Benedictines, offered at that moment the spectacle of four different races desperately struggling against each other for the mastery.

In the north were the Picts and Scots, still strangers and enemies to the faith of Christ, intrenched behind those mountains and gulfs, which gained for them the character of transmarine foreigners, people from beyond seas;[39] continually threatening the southern districts, which they had crushed or stupefied for a century by the intermitting recurrence of their *infestations;* and from which they were driven only by other barbarians as heathen and as savage as themselves.

Farther down, in that region which the gulfs of Clyde, Forth, and Solway constitute the central peninsula of the three which compose Great Britain, were other Picts permanently established, since 448, in the land which they had torn from the Britons, and among whom the apostle Ninian had sown the seeds of Christianity.[40]

To the south-west, and upon all the coast which faces Ireland, remained a native and still independent population. It was here that the unhappy Britons — abandoned by the Romans, decimated, ravaged, and trodden down for a century by the Picts; then for another century spoiled, enslaved, driven from their towns and fields by the Saxons; then driven back again, some to the mountains of Wales, others to that tongue or horn of land which is called Cornwall, *Cornu walliæ*, others to the maritime district which extends from the banks of the Clyde to those of the Mersey[41] — still found an asylum.

[39] Gildas and Bede call them "*gentes transmarinas:* non quod extra Britanniam essent positæ, sed quia a parte Brittonum erant remotæ."

[40] "Picti in *extrema parte insulæ*" (that is to say, of the Roman isle, in Valentia), "tunc primum et deinceps requieverunt, prædas et contritiones nonnunquam facientes," &c. — GILDAS, apud GALE, p. 13.

[41] This was the kingdom of *Strath-Clyde*, which later took the name of Cambria, and of which a vestige remains, and, at the same time, a population more British than Saxon, in the existing county of Cumberland. The boundaries of this kingdom, however, are much disputed. To find a way

Finally, in the south-east, all the country which is now England had fallen a prey to the Anglo-Saxons, who were occupied in laying, under the federative form of the seven or eight kingdoms of the Heptarchy, the immovable foundations of the most powerful nation of the modern world.

But, like the Picts of the north, the Anglo-Saxons were still heathens. From whence shall come to them the light of the Gospel and the bond of Christian civilization, which are indispensable to their future grandeur and virtue? Shall it be from those mountains of Cambria, from Wales, where the vanquished race maintains the sacred fire of faith and the traditions of the British Church, with its native clergy and monastic institutions? It is a question impossible to solve, without having thrown a rapid glance over the religious condition of that picturesque and attractive country during the sixth century.

CHAPTER II.

THE SAINTS AND MONKS OF WALES.

The British refugees in Cambria maintain there the genius of the Celtic race. — Testimony rendered to the virtues of the Welsh by their enemy Giraldus. — Music and poetry: the bards and their triads. — Devotion to the Christian faith. — King Arthur crowned by the Bishop Dubricius. — Alli-

through the confusion of texts and traditions relative to the religious and chronological origin of Great Britain, recourse should be had to two admirable papers, by a modern writer, too soon withdrawn from the ranks of French erudition, M. Varin, Dean of the Faculty of Sciences at Rennes, which are to be found in the *Recueil des Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (tome v., first and second part, 1857, 1858). The first is entitled *Etudes relatives à l'état politique et religieux des Iles Britanniques au moment de l'Invasion Saxonne;* the second, *Mémoire sur les Causes de la Dissidence entre l'Eglise Bretonne et l'Eglise Romaine relativement à la Célébration de la Fête de Pâques.* Before resolving this last question, with a precision and a perspicuity which permit us to follow him without hesitation, M. Varin guides us across all the meanderings of the three principal schools, Irish, English, and Scotch, which dispute the origin of the Caledonians; and which, as personified in *Usher*, *Camden*, and *Innes*, have remained almost unknown to Continental learning.

He regards as proved — 1st, The identity of the Picts with the ancient Caledonians. 2d, The Irish theory, which makes out the *Scots* to be a colony of Hibernians, of Irish origin (probably towards 258), and established in Caledonia before the period of the *infestations.*

ance between the bards and the monks: the bard surprised by the flood. — A few names which float in the ocean of legends. — Mutual influence of Cambria, Armorica, and Ireland upon each other: their legends identical. — The love of the Celtic monks for travel. — Foundation of the episcopal monasteries of St. Asaph by Kentigern, of Llandaff by Dubricius, of Bangor by Iltud, a converted bandit. — St. David, monk and bishop, the Benedict of Wales. — His pilgrimage to Jerusalem, from which he returns archbishop. — The right of asylum recognized. — He restores Glastonbury. — His tomb becomes the national sanctuary of Cambria. — Legend of St. Cadoc and his father and mother. — He founds Llancarvan, the school and burying-place of the Cambrian race. — His poetical aphorisms, his vast domains. — He protects the peasants. — A young girl carried off and restored. — Right of asylum as for St. David. — *The Hate of Cadoc.* — He takes refuge in Armorica, prays for Virgil, returns to Britain, and there perishes by the sword of the Saxons. — His name invoked at the battle of the Thirty. — St. Winifred and her fountain. — St. Beino, the enemy of the Saxons. — The hatred of the Cambrians to the Saxons an obstacle to the conversion of the conquerors.

DURING the long struggle maintained by the Britons in defence of their lands and their independence with the Saxons, whom a succession of invading expeditions brought like waves of the sea upon the eastern and southern shores of the island, a certain number of those who repudiated the foreign rule had sought an asylum in the western peninsulas of their native land, and especially in that great peninsular basin which the Latins called Cambria, and which is now called Wales, the land of the Gael. This district seems intended by nature to be the citadel of England. Bathed on three sides by the sea, defended on the fourth by the Severn and other rivers, this quadrilateral, moreover, contains the highest mountains in the southern part of the island, and a crowd of gorges and defiles inaccessible to the military operations of old. After having served as a refuge to the Britons oppressed by the Roman conquest, Cambria resisted the efforts of the Anglo-Saxons for five centuries, and even remained long inaccessible to the Anglo-Normans, whom it took more than two hundred years to complete in this region the work of William the Conqueror. 449-560. 1066-1284.

Like Ireland and Scotland, and our own Armorica, this fine country has at all times been the object of lively sympathy, not only among learned Celtomaniacs, but among all men whose hearts are moved by the sight of a race which makes defeat honorable by the tenacity of its resistance to the vic-

tor — and still more among all lovers of that inimitable poetry which springs spontaneously from the traditions and instincts of a generous and unfortunate people.

The unquestionable signs of a race entirely distinct from that which inhabits the other parts of England may still be distinguished there; — and there, too, may be found a language evidently the sister language of the three other Celtic dialects which are still in existence — the Breton Armorican, the Irish, and the Gaelic of the Scottish Highlands.

Cambria remains the sanctuary of the Celtic genius.

But it is, above all, in the sudden vicissitudes of the history of Wales, from King Arthur to Llewellyn, and in the institutions which enabled it to resist the foreign invasion for seven centuries, that we recognize the true characteristics and rich nature of the ancient British race. Everywhere else the native population had either been killed, enslaved, or absorbed. But in this spot, where it had sufficient strength to survive and flourish along with the other nationalities of the West, it has displayed all its native worth, bequeathing to us historical, juridical, and poetical remains, which prove the powerful and original vitality with which it was endowed.[42] By its soul, by its tongue, and by its blood, the race has thus protested against the exaggerated statements made by the Briton Gildas, and the Saxon Bede, of the corruption of the victims of the Saxon invasion. In all times there have been found men, and even the best of men, who thus wrong the vanquished, and make history conspire with fortune to absolve and crown the victors. The turn of the Anglo-Saxons was to come; they also, when the Norman invasion had crushed them, found a crowd of pious detractors to prove that they had merited their fate, and to absolve and mitigate the crimes of the Conquest.

The most striking, and, at the same time, the most attractive, feature in the characteristic history of the Welsh is, without doubt, the ardor of patriotism, the invincible love of liberty and national independence, which they evidenced throughout seven centuries, and which no other race has surpassed. We are specially informed of these qualities, even by the servile chroniclers of their conquerors, by the Anglo-Norman writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, from whom truth extorts the most unequivocal eulogiums. These writers certainly point out certain vices, and especially cer-

[42] See the excellent work entitled *Das Alte Wales*, by Ferdinand Walter, Professor at the University of Bonn. 1859.

tain customs, which are in opposition to the rules of civilized nations, such as that of fighting naked, like the Britons of Cæsar's day, or the Picts of a latter date, against adversaries armed from head to foot. But they rival each other in celebrating the heroic and unwearied devotion of the Gael to their country, and to general and individual freedom; their reverence for the achievements and memory of their ancestors; their love of war; their contempt of life; their charity to the poor; their exemplary temperance, which was combined with inexhaustible hospitality; and, above all, their extraordinary valor in fight, and their obstinate constancy through all their reverses and disasters.[43]

The enemies of the Gael bear witness to their virtues.

Nothing can give a better picture of this people than that decree of their ancient laws which interdicted the seizure by justice, in the house of any Gael whatsoever, of three specified things — his sword, his harp, and one of his books;[44] the harp and the book, because in time of peace they regarded music and poetry as the best occupation of an honest and free man. Thus from infancy every Gael cultivated these two arts, and especially music, with passionate and unanimous eagerness. It was the favorite form, the gracious accompaniment of hospitality. The traveller was everywhere received by choirs of singers. From morning to evening every house rang with the sound of the harp and other instruments, played with a perfection which delighted the foreign hearers, who were at the same time always struck, amid all the skilful turns of musical art, by the constant repetition of sweet and melancholy chords,

Their passionate love for music and poetry.

[43] Let us quote the very words of the enemies of Welsh independence; history too seldom gives us an opportunity of hearing and repeating details so noble: —

"Patriæ tutelæ student et libertatis; pro patria pugnant, pro libertate laborant. . . . Continua pristinæ nobilitatis memoria. . . . Tantæ audaciæ et ferocitatis, ut nudi cum armatis congredi non vereantur, adeo ut sanguinem pro patria fundere promptissime, vitamque velint pro laude pacisci." — GIRALDUS, *Cambriæ Descript.*, c. 8, 10. "In bellico conflictu primo impetu, acrimonia, voce, vultu terribiles tam . . . tubarum prælongarum clangore altisono quam cursu pernici. . . . Gens asperrima . . . hodie confecta et cruentam in fugam turpiter conversa, cras nihilominus expeditionem parat, nec damno nec dedecore retardata." — GIRALD., *De Illaudabilibus Walliæ*, c. 3. "Næc crapulæ dediti nec temulentiæ . . . in equis sola et armis tota versatur intentio. . . . Vespere cœna sobria: et si forte nulla vel minima pars, vesperam alteram patienter expectant. Nemo in hac gente mendicus, omnium hospitia omnibus communia." — *Descr. Cambriæ*, c. 9. "Omnium rerum largissimi, ciborum sibi quisque parcissimus." — GUALT. MAPES, *De Nugis Curialium*, ii. 20.

[44] Triades of Dymvall Moëlmud, 54, ap. WALTER, p. 315.

which seemed to reflect, as in the music of Ireland, the candid genius and cruel destiny of the Celtic race.[45]

The bards. The bards themselves, singers and poets, sometimes even princes and warriors, presided over the musical education of the country as well as over its intellectual development. But they did not confine themselves to song; they also fought and died for national independence; the harp in their hands was often only the auxiliary of the sword, and one weapon the more against the Saxon.[46]

This powerful corporation, which was constituted in a hierarchical form, had survived the ruin of the Druids, and appeared in the sixth century in its fullest splendor in the centre of those poetic assemblies,[47] presided over by the kings and chiefs of the country, which were a truly national institution, and continued to exist until the latest days of Welsh independence. In the numerous relics of their fertile activity recently brought to light by efforts which are as patriotic as intelligent,[48] but still insufficiently elucidated — in those *triads* which, under the comparatively recent form known to us, disguise but faintly the highest antiquity — are to be found treasures of true poetry, in which the savage grandeur of a primitive race, tempered and purified by the teachings and mysteries of the Gospel, seems to play in a thousand limpid currents which sparkle in the morning sunlight of history, before running into and identifying themselves with the great river of Christian tradition in the West.

Christianity of the Gael. For the Christian religion was adopted, cherished, and defended amidst the mountains of Cambria with not less fervor and passion than national indepen-

[45] "Qui matutinis horis adveniunt, puellarum affatibus et cytherarum modulis usque ad vesperam delectantur: domus enim hic quælibet puellas habet ad cytharas ad hoc deputatas. . . . In musico modulamine non uniformiter, ut alibi; sed multipliciter multisque modis et modulis cantilenas emittunt, adeo ut in turba canentium, sicut huic genti mos est, quot videas capita, tot audias carmina discriminaque vocum, varia in unam denique sub B mollis dulcedine blanda consonantiam et organicum convenientia melodiam. . . . In musicis instrumentis dulcedine aures deliniunt et demulcent, tanta modulorum celeritate, pariter et subtilitate feruntur, tantamque discrepantium sub tam præcipiti digitorum rapiditate consonantiam præstant. . . . Semper autem ab molli incipiunt et in idem redeunt, ut cuncta sub jucundæ sonoritatis dulcedine compleantur." — Giraldus Cambrensis, c. 10, 12, 13.

[46] A. de la Borderie, p. 179. La Villemarqué, *Les Bardes Bretons*.

[47] The *Eisteddvods*. An attempt has been made to revive them.

[48] Those of Williams ab Jolo, of Williams ab Ithel, of the two Owens, of Stephens, of Walter, and, above all, of M. de la Villemarqué, who has been the first to open up to literary France the history of a race naturally so dear to the Bretons of Armorica.

dence. Kings and chiefs there were not more blameless than elsewhere. There, too, as everywhere else, the abuse of strength and the exercise of power engendered every kind of crime: too often perjury, adultery, and murder appear in their annals.[49] But at the same time faith and repentance often reclaimed their rights over souls not so much corrupt as gone astray. In imitation of the great Arthur, who was crowned, according to Celtic tradition, in 516, by a holy archbishop called Dubricius, they almost all showed themselves zealous for the service of God and generous to the Church; and the people, separated from Rome by the waves of blood in which the Saxon invasion had drowned British Christianity, soon displayed again that natural tendency which marked them out to the Norman conquerors as the most zealous of all the pilgrims who made their eager way to the tombs of the apostles.[50]

Coronation of Arthur.

The bards, though they had existed before Christianity, far from being hostile to it, lived in an intimate and cordial alliance with the clergy, and especially with the monks. Each monastery had its bard — at once poet and historian — who chronicled the wars, alliances, and other events of the age. Every three years these national annalists, like the pontiffs of ancient Rome, assembled to compare their narratives, and to register them at the foot of the code of *Good customs* and *ancient liberties* of the country, of which they were the guardians.[51] It was in these monastic schools also that the bards were trained to poetry and to music. The best known among them, Taliesin, was educated, like the historian Gildas, in the Monastery of Llancarvan.[52]

Union of the bards and the monks.

Let us here quote one incident out of a hundred which throws light upon the singularly intimate connection existing between the poetry of the Welsh bards and the legends of the monastic orders, while it shows at the same time the proud intrepidity of

A bard, while celebrating the fame of a hermit, is surprised by a flood.

[49] See the numerous examples collected by Lingard (*Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. ii. p. 362), in the *Book of Llandaff*, and other Welsh documents.

[50] "Præ omni peregrino labore Romam peregre libentius eundo, devotis mentibus apostolorum limina propensius adorant." — *Cambriæ Descriptio*, p. 891, ed. 1602. Let us repeat once more, that in none of the numerous relics of Welsh archæology and geography recently published can there be found the slightest trace of hostility, either systematic or temporary, against the Holy See.

[51] Walter, op. cit., p. 33. Lloyd, *History of Cambria*, ed. Powell, præf., p. 9.

[52] La Villemarqué, *Poëmes des Bardes Bretons*, 1850, p. 44.

the Celtic character. The father of the founder of the Monastery of Llancarvan having become a hermit, as will be narrated further on, died in the odor of sanctity, and was buried in a church, to which crowds were soon attracted by the miraculous cures accomplished. Among those crowds came a bard with the intention of making a poem in honor of the new saint. While he composed his lines a sudden flood ravaged the surrounding country, and penetrated even into the church itself. All the neighboring population and their cattle had already perished, and the waters continued to rise. The bard, while composing his poem, took refuge in the higher story of the church, and then upon the roof; he mounted from rafter to rafter pursued by the flood, but still continuing to improvise his lines, and drawing from danger the inspiration which had been previously wanting. When the water subsided, from the tomb of the hermit to the Severn, there remained no living creature except the bard, and no other edifice standing except the church upon which he had put together his heroic strains.[53]

Relics which float on the sea of legends.

In this sea of Celtic legend, where neither fables nor anachronisms are sufficient to obscure the vigorous and constant affirmation of Catholic faith and British patriotism, a few names of monastic founders and missionaries still survive. They have been rescued from forgetfulness not only by the revived learning of Cambrian archæologists, but also by faithful popular tradition, even after the complete and lamentable extinction of Catholicism in Wales.[54] While surveying their lives, and examining the

[53] "Britannus quidam versificator Britannice versificans, composuit carmina a gente sua. . . . Nondum eadem finita erant a compositore. . . . Marina undositas contexit campestria, submergit habitatores et ædificia: equi cum bobus natant in aqua: matres tenebant filios præ manibus . . . fiunt cadavera. Cum viderit undositatem altissimam imminere, suscepit componere quartam partem carminum. Dum incepisset, impleta est fluctibus: post hæc ascendit trabes superius, et secutus est iterum tumens fluctus tertio super tectum, nec cessat ille fungi laudibus. Illis finitis Britannus poeta evasit, domus fulciens stabilivit." — *Vita S. Gundleii*, c. 11, ap. Rees, p. 15.

[54] See the important publication entitled *Lives of the Cambro-British Saints of the Fifth and immediate successive Centuries, from ancient Welsh and Latin MSS.*, by the Rev. W. Rees, Llandovery, 1853; a work to which nothing is wanting except an historical and geographical commentary, adapted for foreign readers. It is entirely distinct from the *Essay on the Welsh Saints*, by the Rev. Rice Rees, so much praised by Walter, but which I have not been able to meet with. The biographies published by Rees, from the MS. in the Cottonian Library, are partly in Welsh and partly in Latin; they must have been, not written, but certainly retouched at a later period than that to which in the first place one is tempted to attribute them. By the side of details evidently contemporary and local are to be found traces of

general scope of the monastic legends and institutions connected with them, the existence of a double influence which attracts the looks and steps of the Gael from their native mountains to Armorica in the south, and to Ireland in the west, becomes immediately apparent; as is also the constant reflux of these two countries back upon Great Britain, from whence had come their first missionaries, and the religious and national life of which had concentrated itself more and more in Cambria.

Reciprocal influence exercised by Cambria, Armorica, and Ireland upon each other.

The Saxon invasion, as has been already seen,[55] had thrown upon the shores of Gaul a crowd of fugitives, who, transformed into missionaries, had created a new Britain, invincibly Christian and Catholic, at the gates of Merovingian France. The most celebrated among these missionaries, Tugdual, Samson, Malo, and Paul Aurelian, had been educated in the Cambrian monasteries, from whence also the historian Gildas and the bard Taliesin accompanied them beyond the seas. From the earliest days of her conversion Ireland had received a similar emigration. The greater part of these pious and brave missionaries came back once at least in their lives to visit the country which they had left, leading with them disciples, born in other Celtic lands, but eager to carry back to the dear and much-threatened homes of insular Britain the light and fervor which had first been received from them.[56] Thence arises the singular uniformity of proper names, traditions, miracles, and anecdotes, among the legends of the three countries, a uniformity which has often degenerated into inextricable confusion.

The love of the Celtic monks for travel.

One particular, however, which imprints a uniform and very distinct character upon all the holy monks of Celtic origin, is their extraordinary love for distant and frequent journeys — and it is one of the points in which the modern English resemble them most. At that distant age, in the midst of barbarian invasions, and of the local disorganization of the Roman world, and consequently in the face of obstacles which nothing in Europe as it now

declamatory interpolations, which must have been the work of a posterity much less devoted than we are to local color and historical authenticity.

[55] See *ante*.

[56] "Sicut hiemale alvearium, arridente vere, animos extollens . . . aliud foras emittit examen, ut alibi mellificet, ita *Letavia* (the ancient name of Armorica), accrescente serenitate religionis, catervam sanctorum ad originem unde exierunt, transmittit." — *Vit. S. Paterni*, ap. Rees, *Cambro-British Saints*.

exists can give the slightest idea of, they are visible, traversing immense distances, and scarcely done with one laborious pilgrimage before they begin again or undertake another. The journey to Rome, or even to Jerusalem, which finds a place in the legend of almost every Cambrian or Irish saint, seems to have been sport to them. St. Kentigern, for example, went seven times in succession to Rome.[57]

Kentigern, founder of St. Asaph. 550 ?-612.

This same Kentigern, whom we shall meet again hereafter as the missionary bishop of the southern Scots and Picts, is said to have been born of one of those irregular unions which evidence either domestic derangement or the abuse of power among the chiefs and great men of the country, and which are so often referred to in the annals of Celtic hagiography.[58] He was none the less one of the principal monastic personages in Cambria, where he founded, at the junction of the Clwyd,[59] and Elwy, an immense monastery, inhabited by nine hundred and sixty-five monks, three hundred of whom, being illiterate, cultivated the fields; three hundred worked in the interior of the monastery; and the three hundred and sixty-five others celebrated divine worship without interruption.[60] This monastery became at the same time an episcopal see, which still exists under the name of St. Asaph, the successor of Kentigern.[61]

Dubricius, founder of Llandaff.

This was not, however, either the oldest or most important monastic colony of Cambria, where, as in Saxon England, every bishopric was cradled in a monastery. More than a century before Kentigern, Dubricius, whose long life, if tradition is to be believed, made him the contemporary of Patrick and Palladius as well as of King Arthur,

[57] Act. SS. Bolland., t. i. January, p. 819.

[58] "Matrem habuit Pictorum regis filiam. . . . Ea seu vi compressa, seu dolo, a nobili adolescente cum uterum gereret, auctorem prodere . . . pertinenter fertur recusasse. . . . Plurium ex eadem Scottorum ac Britannorum gente sanctorum par ortus narratur, Fursæi, Davidis," &c. — Bolland., p. 815.

[59] This is the Clwyd of Wales, and not the Clyde at Glasgow where St. Kentigern was bishop. There are also two rivers Dee — one in Wales and one in Scotland — which occasions a confusion of which it is well to be warned.

[60] Bolland., p. 819. This monastery was at first called Llan-Elwy.

[61] Each tribe, every little princedom of Wales, had its bishopric. Llandaff for the Silurians, Menevia (afterwards St. David's) for the Demetes, &c. There was one also at Margam, which afterwards became a celebrated Cistercian abbey. The ruins, enclosed and preserved with care in the splendid residence of a branch of the house of Talbot, are well worthy of being visited and admired.

is instanced as the first founder of a great monastic centre in Cambria, from which religious colonies swarmed off continually to Armorica and to Ireland. Dubricius was ordained bishop at Llandaff in the south of Wales by St. Germain of Auxerre, and ended his career in the north as a hermit, after having assembled at one period more than a thousand auditors round his pulpit. Among these the most illustrious were Iltud and David.

Iltud, a converted bandit, founds the great Cambrian Monastery of Bangor.

Iltud, or Eltut, who was also a disciple of St. Germain, founded the great Monastery of Bangor upon the banks of the Dee, which became a centre of missionary enterprise, as well as of political resistance to the foreign conquerors; it was reckoned to consist of seven divisions, each of three hundred monks, who all lived by the labor of their hands. It was a veritable army, yet still a half less than that of the four thousand monks of the other Bangor,[62] on the other side of the Channel, in Ireland, which was destined to be the cradle of St. Columbanus and St. Gall, the monastic apostles of eastern France and of Switzerland.[63] Iltud was born in Armorica, but his curious legend, some touching details of which our readers will thank us for quoting, records that he was attracted to Wales by the fame of his cousin, King Arthur. He began his life there as a man of war and of rapine; but he was converted while hawking by the sight of a catastrophe which befell his companions, who, at the moment when they had extorted from the holy abbot Cadoc, the founder of Llancarvan, fifty loaves, a measure of beer, and a fat pig, to satisfy their hunger, were swallowed up by the earth, which opened under their feet. Iltud, terrified by this lesson and counselled by the abbot Cadoc, consecrated himself to the service of God in solitude, even although he was married and dearly loved his young and beautiful wife. At first, she desired to accompany him and share with him the hut of branches which he had built on the banks of the Tave, in Gloucestershire. "What!" said an angel who appeared to him in a dream;

[62] There was, besides, a third Bangor or Banchor, which is the existing bishopric of that title, and was also founded by a disciple of Dubricius, the holy abbot Daniel, who died about 548. This little episcopal see, situated on the sea-coast, in the county of Caernarvon, has often been confounded with the great monastery of the same name which was in Flintshire, on the banks of the Dee. Ban-gor, which is interpreted to mean *magnus circulus*, seems, besides, to have been a sort of generic name for monastic congregations or enclosures.

[63] See *ante*, p. 550.

"thou also art enthralled by the love of a woman? Certainly thy wife is beautiful, but chastity is more beautiful still." Obedient to that voice, he abandoned his wife, and at the same time his horses and followers, buried himself in a deep wood, and there built an oratory which the number of his disciples soon changed into a convent. He divided his life between great agricultural labors and frequent struggles with the robber-kings and chiefs of the neighborhood. He distinguished himself specially by constructing immense dikes against the floods from which Wales seems to have suffered so much. His wife pursued him even into this new solitude; but when she discovered him at the bottom of a ditch which he was himself digging, with his body and face covered with mud, she saw that it was no longer her fair knight of other days, and thenceforward gave up visiting him, lest she should displease God and the friend of God. Later in his life he shut himself up in a cave where he had only the cold stone for his bed. He took delight in this solitary lair for four long years, and left it only twice, to protect his monastery against violence and robbery. He died at Dol, in that Armorica which he had always loved, and where he took pleasure in sending in times of famine, to help his Breton countrymen beyond seas, shiploads of grain which were provided by the labors of his Welsh community.[64]

He is pursued by his wife, who will not consent to his conversion.

David is much more generally known than his co-disciple, Iltut. He has always continued popular among the inhabitants of Wales; and Shakespeare informs us that, even since the Reformation, the Welsh have retained the custom of wearing a leek in their hats upon his

St. David, monk and bishop.

[64] "Princeps militiæ et tribunus . . . miles olim celeberrimus. . . . Accipitrem per volatiles instigabat. . . . Astabat angelus ammonens: Te quoque muliebris amor occupat . . . uxor est decora sed castimonia est melior. . . . Uxore consociante et armigeris . . . composuit tegmen ex arundineto ut non plueret super lectum. . . . Mulier licet induta finxit se frigescere cum tremulo pectore, quatenus posset in lecto denuo collateralis jacere. . . . Operatus est immensam fossam limo et lapidibus mixtam, quam retruderet irruentem undam. . . . Ubi operosum vidit fossorem per assidua fossura lutulentum perfaciens . . . inquisivit ab eo suave colloquium. . . . Conspexit illa vilem habitum . . . non sicut antea viderat militem speciosum. . . . Remansit itaque . . . nunquam amplius visitans eum, quæ nolebat displicere Deo et Dei dilectissimo. . . . Tota nocte jacebat super frigidam petram . . . quasi diceret:

"Hoc lapis in lecto positus sub pectore nostro,
Hec mea dulcedo: jaceam pro Numine summo.
Mollis erit merces ventura beata beato,
Que manet in cœlo michi debita, quando redibo."

Vita S. Iltuti, Rees, pp. 45, 161–182.

feast-day.[65] His history has been often written,[66] and through the transformation of the legend it is still easy to recognize in it the salutary sway of a great monk and bishop over souls which were faithful to religion, but yet in full conflict with those savage and sensual impulses which are to be found only too universally among all men and all nations, in the centre of civilization as on the verge of barbarism. The origin, indeed, of the holy patron of Cambria himself, like that of St. Bridget, the patroness of Ireland, affords a startling proof of a state of affairs both corrupt and violent. He was the son of a nun whom the king of the country — a nephew of the great Arthur — met upon the public road, and whom, struck by her beauty, he instantly made the victim of his passion.[67] This crime is told by all the biographers of David, generally so lavish of praise and blame, without the least expression of surprise or indignation. The scribe Paulinus, whose name indicates a Roman origin, and who is known to have been a disciple of St. Germain of Auxerre, was charged with the education of the young David, which was as long and complete as possible.[68] He issued from his tutor's hands clothed with the priesthood and devoted to a kind of monastic existence

[65] "Pistol. Art thou of Cornish crew?
King Henry. No, I'm a Welshman.
Pistol. Knowest thou Fluellen?
King. Yes.
Pistol. Tell him I'll knock his leek about his pate
Upon St. Davy's day."

And afterwards: —

"Fluellen. I do believe your majesty takes no scorn
To wear the leek upon St. Davy's day.
King. I wear it for a memorable honor:
For I am Welsh, you know, good countryman."

King Henry V.

[66] Notably by an anonymous writer, of whose work the Franciscan Colgan has published a first version in his *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*, vol. i. Ricemarch, the successor of David as bishop of Menevia towards 1085, gave a much more complete version of this first biography, which has been published by Rees in his *Lives of Cambro-British Saints*. Another of his successors, the famous Giraldus Cambrensis, has also written a life of St. David, which may be found in Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, vol. ii. The date and duration of his life is, however, very uncertain: according to Usserius he lived between 472 and 554; according to the Bollandists, between 447 and 544; according to other authorities, between 484 and 566.

[67] "Invenit rex obviam sibi sanctam monialem, Nonnitam virginem, puellam pulchram nimis et decoram, quam, concupiscens tetigit vi oppressam." — Ricemarch, ed. Rees, p. 119. "In quam ut oculos injecit, in cupidinem ejus medullitus exardens, statim equo dilapsus, virgineis amplexibus est delectatus." — Giraldus, p. 629.

[68] "Quique eum docuit in tribus partibus lectionis, donec fuit scriba; mansit ibi multis annis legendo, implendoque quod legebat." — Ricemarch, p. 122.

which did not exclude him either from Continental travel, nor from exercising a great influence over men and external affairs. He exercised a double power over his countrymen, by directing one part to cenobitical life, and arming the other with the knowledge and virtue which enabled them to triumph over the dangers of a secular career. It is on this latter point that he differs from his illustrious contemporary, St. Benedict, whom he resembles in so many other features. Like Benedict, he founded, almost at one time, twelve monasteries; like Benedict, he saw his young disciples tempted to their fall by the voluptuous wiles of shameless women; like Benedict, he was exposed to the danger of being poisoned by traitors in the very bosom of his own community;[69] and, finally, like Benedict, he imposed upon his monks a rule which severely prohibited all individual property, and made manual and intellectual labor obligatory. The agricultural labor thus prescribed was so severe, that the Welsh monks had not only to saw the wood and delve the soil, but even to yoke themselves to the plough, and work without the aid of oxen. As soon as this toil came to an end they returned to their cells to pass the rest of the day in reading and writing; and when thus engaged it was sometimes necessary to stop in the midst of a letter or paragraph, to answer to the first sound of the bell, by which divine service was announced.[70]

He becomes the Benedict of Cambria.

In the midst of these severe labors the abbot David had continual struggles with the *satraps* and *magicians*, which, no doubt, means the chiefs of the clan and the Druids, who had not been destroyed in Britain, as in Gaul, by the Roman

[69] "Convocatis ancillis: Ite, inquit uxor satrapæ, ad flumen Alum, et, nudatis corporibus, in conspectu sanctorum ludite. . . . Ancillæ obediunt . . . impudicos exercent ludos . . . concubitus simulant blandos . . . monachoram mentes quorumdam ad libidines protrahunt, quorumdam molestant. Cuncti vero, discipuli ejus dixerunt David: Fugiamus ex hoc loco, quia non possumus hic habitare propter molestiam muliercularum malignantium. Diaconus qui pani ministrare consuluerat, panem veneno confectum mensa imponit, cui coquus et œconomus consenserant." — Ricemarch, p. 125–31.

[70] "Pede manuque laborant, jugum ponunt in humero, suffossarias verangasque invicto brachio terre defigunt, sarculos serrasque ad succidendum sanctis ferunt manibus. . . . Boum nulla ad arandum cura introducitur. Quisque sibi et fratribus divitiæ, quisque et bos. . . . Peracto rurali opere, totam ad vesperam pervagabant diem aut legendo aut scribendo aut orando . . . vespere cum nole pulsus audiebatur, quisquis studium detexebat, si enim auribus cujuscumque pulsus resonaret, scripto tunc litere apice vel etiam dimidia ejusdem litere, figura citius assurgentes . . . ecclesiam petunt, eam incompletam dimmittebant." — Ricemarch, p. 127. I quote literally the Latin of Ricemarch, which is often very singular. Further on he adds Greek after his fashion.

conquest,[71] and whose last surviving representatives could not see, without violent dislike, the progress of monastic institutions. But the sphere of David's influence and activity was to extend far beyond that of his early work. Having made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he returned thence invested with the office of archbishop, which had been conferred upon him by the patriarch of Jerusalem.[72] On his return he was acknowledged metropolitan of all that part of the island not yet invaded by the Saxons, by two very numerously attended councils,[73] in which he had the honor of striking a death-blow at the Pelagian heresy, which had come to life again since the mission of St. Germain.

He goes to Jerusalem, and returns Archbishop.

519.

One of these councils recognized in his honor a right of asylum, pointed out by ancient authors as the most respected and the most complete which existed in Britain, and which created for all pursued culprits an inviolable refuge wherever there was a field which had been given to David.[74] This is one of the first examples, as conferred upon a monastic establishment, of that right of asylum, afterwards too much extended, and disgracefully abused towards the end of the middle ages, but which, at that far-distant period, was a most important protection to the weak. Who does not understand how irregular and brutal was at that time the pursuit of a criminal; how many vile and violent passions usurped the office of the law; and

Right of asylum given to David.

[71] Dœllinger, *Heidenthum und Judenthum*, p. 611.

[72] Compare Bolland., *Act. SS.*, Martii, t. i. p. 40.

[73] At Brèves in 519, and at Victoria in 526. The expressions of Ricemarch upon this last synod are worthy of remark, since they prove the presence of abbots beside the bishops of the council, and the undisputed recognition of Roman authority. It remains to be ascertained, however, whether this writer of the eleventh century did not attribute the customs of his own time to a previous age. "Alia synodus . . . in qua collecta episcoporum, sacerdotum, abatum turba . . . cunctorum consensu . . . omnium ordinum totius Britanniæ gentis archiepiscopus constitutus. . . . Ex his duabus synodis omnes nostræ patriæ ecclesiæ modum et regulam Romana auctoritate receperunt."

[74] "Dederuntque universi episcopi manus et monarchiam, et *bragminationem* David agio, et consenserunt omnes licitum esse refugium ejus ut daret illud omni stupro et homicide et peccatori, omnique maligno fugienti de loco ad locum pro omni sancto ac regibus et hominibus totius Britanniæ insulæ in omni regno, et in unaquaque regione in qua sit ager consecratus David agio. Et nulli reges neque seniores, neque satrapæ, sed neque episcopi principesve ac sancti audeant præ David agio refugium dare; ipse vero refugium ducit ante unumquemque hominem, et nemo ante ipsum, quia ipse est caput et previus ac *bragmaticus* omnibus Brittonibus. Et statuerunt omnes sancti anathema esset et maledictum, quisquis non servaverit illud decretum silicet refugium sancti David." — Ricemarch, p. 140.

how justice herself and humanity had reason to rejoice when religion stretched her maternal hands over a fugitive unjustly accused, or even over a culprit who might be worthy of excuse or indulgence!

David immediately resumed his monastic and ecclesiastical foundations,[75] and restored for the first time from its ruins the Church of Glastonbury, so that it might consecrate the tomb of his cousin King Arthur.[76] He himself died more than a hundred years old, surrounded by the reverence of all, and in reality the chief of the British nation.[77] He was buried in the Monastery of Menevia, which he had built at the southern extremity of Wales, facing Ireland, on a site which had been indicated thirty years before by St. Patrick, the apostle of that island. It was of all his foundations the one most dear to him, and he had made of it the seat of a diocese which has retained his name.

541.

His tomb becomes the national sanctuary of Cambria.

After his death the monastic tomb of the great bishop and British chief became a much-frequented place of pilgrimage. Not only the Welsh, Bretons, and Irish came to it in crowds, but three Anglo-Norman kings — William the Conqueror, Henry II., and Edward I. — appeared there in their turn. David was canonized by Pope Calistus II. in 1120, at a period when Wales still retained its independence. He became from that moment, and has remained until the present time, the patron of Cambria. A group of half-ruined religious buildings, forming altogether one of the most solemn and least visited relics of Europe, still surrounds the ancient cathedral which bears his name, and crowns the imposing promontory, thrust out into the sea like an eagle's beak, from the south-eastern corner of the principality of Wales, which is still more deserving than the two analogous headlands of Cornwall and Armorica, of the name of Finisterre.[78]

Legend of St. Cadoc.

522-590?

Immediately after the period occupied in the annals of Cambria by King Arthur and the monk-bishop David, another monastic and patriotic saint becomes visible, who, like his predecessor, remained long popular among the Britons of Wales, and is so still among the Bretons

[75] "Per cuncta totius patriæ loca monasteria construxere fratres . . . quanta monachorum examina seminavit."

[76] Ricemarch, p. 125; Dugdale, t. i. p. 1–7; Bolland., *loc. cit.*

[77] "Omnis Britanniæ gentis caput et patriæ honor." — Rees, p. 140.

[78] A group of rocks near this promontory is still called *The Bishop and his Clerks.* It lies a little way to the north of the celebrated Roads of Milford Haven and the great dockyard of the English navy at Pembroke.

of Armorica. This was St. Cadoc or Kadok, a personage regarding whom it will be very difficult to make an exact distinction between history and legend, but whose life has left so profound an impression upon the Celtic races, that we may be permitted to borrow from it certain details, which will set in a clear light the faith and manners of these races and of that age.[79] His father, Gundliew or Guen-Liou, surnamed the Warrior, one of the petty kings of southern Cambria, having heard much of the beauty of the daughter of a neighboring chief, had her carried off, by a band of three hundred vassals, from the midst of her sisters, and from the door of her own chamber, in her father's castle.[80] The father hastened to the rescue of his daughter with all his vassals and allies, and soon overtook Guen-Liou, who rode with the young princess at the croup, going softly not to fatigue her. It was not an encounter favorable for the lover: two hundred of his followers perished, but he himself succeeded in escaping safely with the lady, whose attractions he had afterwards to conceal from the passion of King Arthur;[81] for that great king is far from playing in all the monastic legends the chivalric and disinterested part afterwards attributed to him by the host of national and European traditions of which he is the hero. Of this rude warrior and his beautiful princess was to be born the saint who has been called the Doctor of the Cambrian race, and who founded the great monastic establishment which has been already mentioned here. The very night of his birth the soldiers, or, to speak more justly, the robber-followers (*latrones*), of the king his father, who had been sent to pillage the neighbors right and left, stole the milch cow of a holy Irish monk, who had no sustenance, he nor his twelve disciples, except the abundant milk of this cow. When informed of this nocturnal theft, the monk got up, put

Son of a stolen princess, and of a robber-king.

[79] *Vita S. Cadoci*, ap. REES, *op. cit.*, p. 22–96; HERSART DE LA VILLEMARQUÉ, *La Légende Celtique*, p. 127–227.

[80] Talgarth, nine miles from the town of Brecknock. The name of the beautiful princess was Gwladys, in Latin Gladusa, and that of her father Brychan or Brachan.

[81] "Puellam eleganti quidem specie, sed et forma valde decoram. . . . Virginem ante conclavis suæ januam cum ipsius sororibus sedentem pudicisque sermonibus vacantem . . . statim vi capientes obstinato cursu regrediuntur . . . Gundlaus . . . jussit puellam afferri . . . haud fugiendo, sed pedetentim secum gestans adolescentulam in equo. . . . Ubi corpore incolumis cum prænotata virgine . . . terminos suæ terræ attigisset . . . ecce Arthurus: . . . Scitote me vehementer in concupiscentiam puellæ hujus quam ille miles equitando devehit accendi." — *Vita S. Cadoci*, ap. REES, p. 23.

on his shoes in all haste, and hurried to reclaim his cow from the king, who was still asleep. The latter took advantage of the occasion to have his new-born son baptized by the pious solitary, and made him promise to undertake the education and future vocation of the infant. The Irishman gave him the name of Cadoc, which in Celtic means warlike; and then, having recovered his cow, went back to his cell to await the king's son, who was sent to him at the age of seven, having already learned to hunt and to fight.[82]

Educated by an Irish monk.

The young prince passed twelve years with the Irish monk, whom he served, lighting his fire and cooking his food, and who taught him grammar according to Priscian and Donatus.[83] Preferring the life of a recluse to the throne of his father, he went to Ireland for three years, to carry on his education at Lismore, a celebrated monastic school, after which he returned to Cambria, and continued his studies under a famous British rhetorician, newly arrived from Italy, who taught Latin and the liberal arts after the best Roman system.[84] This doctor had more pupils than money: famine reigned in his school. One day poor Cadoc, who fasted continually, was learning his lesson in his cell, seated before a little table, and leaning his head on his hands, when suddenly a white mouse, coming out of a hole in the wall, jumped on the table and put down a grain of corn; but being unable to attract the attention of the student, she returned with a second and third grain, and continued until seven grains lay before his eyes. Then Cadoc rising, followed the mouse into a cellar, where he found deposited an enormous heap of corn.[85] This wheat, a gift of Providence, gave sustenance to the master and his pupils; and, according to the wish of Cadoc, was shared with all who were in want like themselves.

Having early decided to embrace monastic life, he hid

[82] "Satellites suos sæpius ad rapinam et latrocinia instigabat. . . . Quidam ex Gundleii latronibus ad quoddam oppidum . . . furandi causa pervenerunt, quos prenotatus Gundleius rex fures diligebat, eosque sæpius ad latrocinia instigabat. . . . Surge velociter . . . et calcia caligas tuas, nam bos tua a furibus exstat ablata . . . ad triclinium in quo dormierat rex . . . adepta prædicta bove." — Rees, pp. 85, 25, 27.

[83] "Tibi filium meum commendo . . . ut illum liberalibus artibus divinisque dogmatibus erudias. . . . Illum Donato, Priscianoque, necnon aliis artibus, per annos duodecim diligentius instruxit." — P. 28.

[84] "Ab illo Romano more latinitate doceri non minimum optavit." — *Vita*, c. 8.

[85] "Mus septies eundo et redeundo totidem triticea in suo volumine abdidit, animadvertens indicio divinam sibi adesse miserationem." — *Ibid.*

himself in a wood, where, after making a narrow escape from assassination by the armed swineherd of a neighboring chief, he saw, near a forgotten fountain, an enormous wild boar, white with age, come out of his den, and make three bounds, one after the other, stopping each time, and turning round to stare furiously at the stranger who had disturbed him in his resting-place. Cadoc marked with three branches the three bounds of the wild boar, which afterwards became the site of the church, dormitories, and refectory of the great Abbey of Llancarvan, of which he was the founder. The abbey took its name (*Ecclesia Cervorum*) from the celebrated legend, according to which, two deer from the neighboring wood came one day to replace two idle and disobedient monks who had refused to perform the necessary labor for the construction of the monastery, saying, "Are we oxen, that we should be yoked to carts, and compelled to drag timber?" [86]

He founds Llancarvan, the burying place of the kings and nobles, and the great monastic school of Wales.

Llancarvan, however, was not only a great workshop, where numerous monks, subject to a very severe rule, bowed their bodies under a yoke of continual fatigue, clearing the forests, and cultivating the fields when cleared; it was, besides, a great religious and literary school, in which the study and transcription of the Holy Scriptures held the van, and was followed by that of the ancient authors and their more recent commentators.

Among the numerous pupils whom it received — some to follow the monastic life for the rest of their days, some only to carry on their ordinary education — were many chiefs' and kings' sons like Cadoc himself. To these he addressed special instructions, which may be summed up in the two sentences which a prince of North Wales remembered long after to have heard from his own lips — "Remember that thou art a man;" "There is no king like him who is king of himself." [87]

Cadoc loved to sum up, chiefly under the form of sentences in verse and poetical aphorisms, the instructions given to the pupils of the Llancarvan cloister. A great number of such poetical utterances, which have been preserved in the memory of the Gael and brought to light by modern erudition, are attributed to him. We instance some, which are not the less interesting and touch-

Poetic aphorisms of Cadoc.

[86] "Numquid more boum plaustra gestare valemus?"
[87] La Villemarqué, p. 184.

ing, for having been produced in a British cloister in the sixth century, under the disturbing influences of Saxon invasion, and far from all the fountains of classic wisdom and beauty: —

Truth is the elder daughter of God.
Without light nothing is good.
Without light there is no piety.
Without light there is no religion.
Without light there is no faith.
There is no light without the sight of God.

The same thought is afterwards reproduced under another form: —

Without knowledge, no power.
Without knowledge, no wisdom.
Without knowledge, no freedom.
Without knowledge, no beauty.
Without knowledge, no nobleness.
Without knowledge, no victory.
Without knowledge, no honor.
Without knowledge, no God.
The best of attitudes is humility.
The best of occupations, work.
The best of sentiments, pity.
The best of cares, justice.
The best of pains, that which a man takes to make peace between two enemies.
The best of sorrows, sorrow for sin.
The best of characters, generosity.

The poet then makes his appearance by the side of the theologian and moralist: —

No man is the son of knowledge if he is not the son of poetry.
No man loves poetry without loving the light;
Nor the light without loving the truth;
Nor the truth without loving justice;
Nor justice without loving God.
And he who loves God cannot fail to be happy.

The love of God was, then, the supreme aim of his teaching as of his life. When one of his disciples asked him to define it, he answered: —

"Love, it is Heaven."
"And hate?" asked the disciple.
"Hate is Hell."
"And conscience?"
"It is the eye of God in the soul of man." [88]

Cadoc asked nothing from the postulants who came to take the cowl in his monastery. On the contrary, in order to gain

[88] I borrow these quotations from those drawn by M. Walter and M. de la Villemarqué from the collection entitled *Myvyrian Archæology of Wales*, London, 1801–7.

admission it was necessary to lay aside everything, even to the last article of dress, and to be received *naked as a shipwrecked man*, according to the expression of the rule.[89] This was the easier to him that he was himself rich by means of the gifts of land given him by his father and maternal grandfather.[90]

Penitence of his father and mother.

Cadoc had the happiness of assisting in the conversion of his father before he became his heir. In the depths of his cloister he groaned over the rapines and sins of the old robber from whom he derived his life and his monastic possessions. Accordingly he sent to his father's house three of his monks, who, after having consulted with the elders and lords of the country, undertook to preach repentance to the father of their abbot. His mother, the beautiful Gladusa, carried off of old by King Guen-Liou, was the first to be touched. "Let us believe," she said, "in our son, and let him be our father for heaven." And it was not long before she persuaded her husband to agree with her. They called their son to make to him public confession of their sins, after which the king said, "Let all my race obey Cadoc with true piety, and after death let all the kings, earls, and chiefs, and all the servants of the kings, be buried in his cemetery."[91] Then the father and son chanted together the psalm, "*Exaudiat te Dominus in die tribulationis.*" When this was ended the king and queen retired into solitude, establishing themselves in the first place at a short distance from each other, in two cabins on the bank of a river. They lived there by the work of their hands, without other food than barley bread, in which there was a mingling of ashes, and cresses, the bitterness of which was sweet to them as a foretaste of heaven. One of their principal austerities, which is also to be found in the history of various other Celtic and Anglo-Saxon saints, was to bathe, in winter as in summer, in cold water in the middle of the night, and to pass its remaining hours in prayer. Cadoc visited them often and exhorted them to perseverance; he ended even by persuading them to give up the comparative sweetness of their life together. His mother was still the first to obey him. She sought out a more pro-

[89] La Villemarqué, p. 160.

[90] The boundaries of his lands are very exactly noted by his biographer, Rees, pp. 38, 45, and 336.

[91] Llancarvan actually became the burying-place of the Welsh kings and nobility as long as the independence of the country lasted; but, strangely enough, King Guen-Liou was not himself buried there.

found solitude, and disappeared there. Guen-Liou followed her example. He died soon after in his son's arms, leaving him all his lands.[92] One would fain hope that the same consolation was accorded to a mother so generous, but the legend is silent as to her death.

He protects the cultivators of his domain and the neighborhood against the violence of the great.

These patrimonial gifts conferred upon Cadoc great territorial wealth, and an external power which he used to secure around his monastery the safety and wellbeing which were nowhere else to be found. "To know the country of Cadoc," it was said, "it is only necessary to discover where the cattle feed in freedom, where the men fear nothing, and where everything breathes peace."[93] His wealth permitted him to accomplish with success and energy the noble mission which is the most interesting part of his life, in which he appeared as the protector of his dependants and neighbors, the guardian of the goods of the poor, of the honor of women, of the weakness of the humble, and of all the lower classes of the Cambrian people, against the oppression, pillage, violence, and extortions of the princes and the powerful. His personal character, courageous and compassionate, is better evidenced thus than in the position, half of austere solitary, half of feudal chief, which was held by so great a number of monastic superiors in medieval times.

He is at once abbot and prince.

We are expressly told that he was at once abbot and prince. "Are you fools," said the steward of one of his domains to the squires of a Cambrian prince who would have taken from him by force the milk of his cows — "are you unaware that our master is a man of great honor and dignity — that he has a family of three hundred men, maintained at his cost, a hundred priests, a hundred knights, and a hundred workmen, without counting women and children?"[94] It is not, however, apparent that

[92] "Vir Dei pravos proprii genitoris actus congemiscens, sibi condolens . . . Gladusa: . . . Credamur filio nostro, eritque nobis pater in cœlo. . . . Carices fontanæ erant illis in pulmentaria dulces herbe, sed dulcissime que trahebant ad premia. . . . Noluit ut tanta vicinia esset inter illos, ne carnalis concupiscentia a castitate inviolanda perverteret animos. . . . Nunc totam regionem meam, pro quo plures injurias nonnullaque dampna sustinuisti, tibi modo veluti prius coram astantibus cunctis, et meum testamentum hic audientibus commendo." — *Vita S. Cadoci*, c. 24 and 50. *Vita S. Gundleii*, c. 6, 7, 8, ap. Rees.

[93] "Hoc erit vobis in signum: cum ad illius patriam solum veneritis, animalia liberius in pascuis pascentia, hominesque fretos ac imperterritos invenietis . . . ab omni belli precinctu indempnes." — *Vita*, c. 20.

[94] "Abbas enim erat et princeps. . . . Numquid excordes estis, estiman-

he ever fought for his rights by force of arms, as did more than one abbot of later times. But at the head of fifty monks chanting psalms, and with a harp in his hand, he went out to meet the exactors, the robbers, the tyrants, and their followers; and if he did not succeed in arresting their steps and turning them from their evil intentions, he called down upon their heads a supernatural and exemplary chastisement. Sometimes the aggressors were swallowed up in a quagmire, which opened all at once under their feet — and the abyss remained open and gaping, as a warning to future tyrants.[95] Sometimes they were struck with blindness, and wandered groping through the district which they had come to ravage. Such was the fate of the prince whose messengers had carried off the daughter of one of Cadoc's stewards, whose fresh beauty had gained for her the name of Aval-Kain, or *Fresh as an apple.* Her relations mounted their horses, and, giving the alarm everywhere by sound of trumpet, pursued the ravishers and killed them all except one, who escaped to tell the tale to his master. The latter returned with a more numerous following to put the neighborhood to fire and sword; but Cadoc reassured the people, who surrounded him with groans and cries. "Be at rest," he said; "courage and confidence; the Lord will bring our enemies to nothing." And, in fact, the invader and his followers were soon seen groping their way like the blind. "Why comest thou here in arms to pillage and ravage the country?" Cadoc asked of their leader; and he restored him his sight and the means of returning to his country only after having made him swear to maintain perpetual peace. "It is thou whom I will take for my confessor before all other,"[96] said the contrite

tes quod dominus noster honoris sit vir magni et dignitatis cum utique magnam familiam trecentorum virorum, scilicet clericos, totidemque milites atque ejusdem numeri operarios, exceptis parvulis et mulieribus, possideatur." — *Vita*, c. 15, 20.

[95] "Prædones infausti . . . secuti sunt eum fere L. clerici obviantes funesto tyranno cum canticis et hymnis et psalmis. . . . Terra aperuit os suum . . . et absorbuit tyrannum vivum cum suis. . . . Fossaque usque in hodiernum diem cunctis transeuntibus liquet . . . quæ patula semper in hujus rei testimonium permanens a nullo oppilari permittitur." — *Vita*, c. 15.

[96] "Ad B. Cadoci pretoris domum venientes ejusdem formosissimam filiam rapuerunt Abalcem nomine, puellam speciosissimam. . . . Consanguinei puellæ caballos suos ascenderunt, cornibusque insonuerunt. . . . Occurrerunt indigenæ hostili timore perterriti, cum nimio planctu. . . . Respondit eis: Estote robusti nec formidetis. . . . Utquid ad meam patriam armata manu prædandi vastandique causa advenisti? Cui rex: . . . Te hodie confessorem mihi, si tibi beneplacitum fuerit, inter dextrales præ omnibus eligo." — *Vita*, c. 19 and 65.

and comforted prince. On another occasion the smoking of a burning barn blinded the leader whose men had set it on fire. He too was healed by the holy abbot, and presented to Cadoc his sword, his lance, his buckler, and war-horse completely equipped for battle.[97]

By such services, constantly and everywhere renewed, the power of the monastic order was founded, in Britain as elsewhere, in the souls of the Christian people. Such recollections, transmitted from father to son at the domestic hearth, explain the long existence of a fame so nobly acquired. And it is the desire not only to reward, but, above all, to guarantee and perpetuate an intervention at once so powerful and so blessed, which justifies the vast donations lavished, not less by wise foresight than by the gratitude of nations, upon the men who alone showed themselves always ready to combat the greedy and sensual instincts of the kings and the great, and to punish the odious abuses of wealth and force.

He obtains from King Arthur the same right of asylum as was granted to St. David.

The petty robber princes of North Wales were all constrained to recognize the right of asylum and immunity which had been granted to the noble abbot and his monastery by King Arthur, whose states extended to the west and south of Cadoc's domain. For, without any fear of anachronism, the legend takes pains to connect the popular saint with the great Briton king who was once enamoured of his mother; and in connection with this, gives one more instance of the brave and liberal charity of Cadoc, who, not content with protecting his own oppressed countrymen, opened the gates of Llancarvan to exiles and outlaws, and even received there a prince pursued by the hate of Arthur. A long contest followed between the king and the abbot, which was ended by the solemn recognition of a right of asylum similar to that which had been granted to St. David. By the side of this protection guaranteed to fugitives, the principle of *composition* — that is to say, of a ransom for murder, payable in money or in cattle to the relations of the victim — makes its appearance in the abbot's agreements with his rapacious and violent neighbors.[98]

It was thus that the glorious abbot acquired the surname

[97] "Dum prelocutus Rein in tabernaculo ludens in alea cum suis eunuchis consedisset, fumus ad instar lignei postis, de horreo procedens, recto tramite se ad ipsius papilionem tetendit lumenque oculorum omnium ibidem commanentium obcecavit." — *Vita*, c. 20.

[98] *Vita S. Cadoci*, c. 18, 25, 65. La Villemarqué, p. 172–77.

of Cadoc the Wise — a name which still appears at the head of the many poems attributed to him. For, like all the Gaels, he continued faithful to poetry, and often, among his disciples, sang, to the accompaniment of his harp, verses in which he gave full utterance to the religious and patriotic emotions of his heart, as in the poem which has been preserved under the name of the *Hate of Cadoc.*

The Hate of Cadoc.

"I hate the judge who loves money, and the bard who loves war, and the chiefs who do not guard their subjects, and the nations without vigor; I hate houses without dwellers, lands untilled, fields that bear no harvest, landless clans, the agents of error, the oppressors of truth; I hate him who respects not father and mother, those who make strife among friends, a country in anarchy, lost learning, and uncertain boundaries; I hate journeys without safety, families without virtue, lawsuits without reason, ambushes and treasons, falsehood in council, justice unhonored; I hate a man without a trade, a laborer without freedom, a house without a teacher, a false witness before a judge, the miserable exalted, fables in place of teaching, knowledge without inspiration, sermons without eloquence, and a man without conscience." [99]

Cadoc takes refuge in Armorica: is anxious for the salvation of the poet Virgil.

The invasion of the Saxon idolaters, however, with all its accompanying horrors and profanations, reached in succession the banks of the Severn and the Usk, which bounded the monastic domains of Cadoc. He found himself compelled to leave Wales and make sail for Armorica, where so many illustrious exiles, who have since become the apostles and legendary patrons of that glorious province, had preceded him. He founded there a new monastery on a little desert island of the archipelago of Morbihan, which is still shown from the peninsula of Rhuys; and to make his school accessible to the children of the district, who had to cross to the isle and back again in a boat, he threw a stone bridge four hundred and fifty feet long across this arm of the sea. In this modest retreat the Cambrian prince resumed his monastic life, adapting it especially to his ancient scholarly habits. He made his scholars learn Virgil by heart; and one day, while walking with his friend and companion, the famous historian Gildas,[100]

[99] Translated by M. de la Villemarqué, who publishes the original text, p. 309 of his *Légende Celtique.*

[100] "Britannus egregius scholasticus et scriptor optimus." — *Vita S. Cadoci*, p. 59.

with his Virgil under his arm, the abbot began to weep at the thought that the poet whom he loved so much might be even then perhaps in hell. At the moment when Gildas reprimanded him severely for that *perhaps*, protesting that without any doubt Virgil must be damned, a sudden gust of wind tossed Cadoc's book into the sea. He was much moved by this accident, and, returning to his cell, said to himself, "I will not eat a mouthful of bread nor drink a drop of water before I know truly what fate God has allotted to those who sang upon earth as the angels sing in heaven." After this he fell asleep, and soon after, dreaming, heard a soft voice addressing him. "Pray for me, pray for me," said the voice —"never be weary of praying; I shall yet sing eternally the mercy of the Lord."

The next morning a fisherman of Belz brought him a salmon, and the saint found in the fish the book which the wind had snatched out of his hands.[101]

He returns to Britain, and dies, murdered by the Saxons.

After a sojourn of several years in Armorica, Cadoc left his new community flourishing under the government of another pastor, and to put in practice that maxim which he loved to repeat to his followers — "Wouldst thou find glory? — march to the grave!" — he returned to Britain, not to find again the ancient peace and prosperity of his beloved retreat of Llancarvan,[102] but to establish himself in the very centre of the Saxon settlements, and console the numerous Christians who had survived the massacres of the conquest, and lived under the yoke of a foreign and heathen race. He settled at Weedon, in the county of Northampton;[103] and it was there that he awaited his martyrdom.

One morning when, vested with the ornaments of his ec-

[101] La Villemarqué, p. 203. The same sentiment is to be found here which dictated that sequence, pointed out by Ozanam and sung at Mantua upon St. Paul's visit to the tomb of Virgil:

"Ad Maronis mausoleum
Ductus, fudit super eum
Piæ rorem lacrymæ,
Quem te, inquit, reddidissem,
Si te vivum invenissem,
Poetarum maxime!"

[102] "Ad proprias sui cari ruris sedes Llandcarvan." — *Vita*, c. 9.

[103] All historians seem to agree in translating thus the *Beneventum*, in the Latin text, which has given occasion to strange speculations upon the episcopate of Cadoc at Benevento, in Italy. It is not positively stated in the Latin that Cadoc's murderers were Saxons, but such is the unvarying tradition, which is also affirmed by M. de la Villemarqué, on the authority of the Chronicle of Quimperlé, in the possession of Lord Beaumont, at Castleton (Yorkshire), and according to the inscription of a tablet in the Chapel of St. Cadoc, near Entel, in Brittany.

clesiastical rank, he was celebrating the divine sacrifice, a furious band of Saxon cavalry, chasing the Christians before them, entered pell-mell into the church, and crowded towards the altar. The saint continued the sacrifice as calmly as he had begun it. A Saxon chief, urging on his horse, and brandishing his lance, went up to him and struck him to the heart. Cadoc fell on his knees; and his last desire, his last thought, were still for his dear countrymen: "Lord," he said, while dying, "invisible King, Saviour Jesus, grant me one grace — protect the Christians of my country;[104] let their trees still bear fruit, their fields give corn; fill them with goods and blessings; and, above all, be merciful to them, that, after having honored Thee on earth, they may glorify Thee in heaven!"

His popularity lasts till the battle of the Thirty.

The Britons of Cambria and of Armorica long disputed the glory and privilege of paying to Cadoc those honors which were due to him at once in a religious and national point of view. But the latter have remained the most faithful; and eight centuries after his death the great Celtic monk and patriot was still invoked as their special patron by the Breton knights in the famous battle of the Thirty, where Beaumanoir drank his own blood. On their way to the field they went into a chapel dedicated to St. Cadoc, and appealed to him for aid, and returned victorious, singing a Breton ballad, which ends thus —

"He is not the friend of the Bretons who does not cry for joy to see our warriors return with the yellow broom in their casques;

"He is no friend of the Bretons, nor of the Breton saints, who does not bless St. Cadoc, the patron of our warriors;

"He who does not shout, and bless, and worship, and sing, 'In heaven, as on earth, Cadoc has no peer.'"[105]

St. Winifred, her martyrdom and her fountain.

The long popularity of this Cambrian Briton upon the two shores of that sea which separates the Celtic countries is, however, eclipsed by that of a young girl, whose history is unknown, and her faith unpractised, by the Welsh population of the present day, but whose memory has nevertheless been preserved

[104] La Villemarqué, p. 215.

[105] The Breton text of this ballad has been published by M. de la Villemarqué. The touching narrative of his visit to the ruins of Llancarvan, and of the devotion which still draws a crowd of pilgrims into the isle of Morbihan, which was inhabited by the saint, will be found in his *Légende Celtique*.

among them with superstitious fidelity. This is Winifred, the young and beautiful daughter of one of the lords of Wales. Flying from the brutality of a certain King Caradoc,[106] who had found her alone in her father's house, she fled to the church where her parents were praying, but was pursued by the king, who struck off her head on the very threshold of the church. At the spot where the head of this martyr of modesty struck the soil, there sprang up an abundant fountain, which is still frequented, and even venerated, by a population divided into twenty different sects, but animated by one common hatred for Catholic truth. This fountain has given its name to the town of Holywell. Its source is covered by a fine Gothic porch of three arches, under which it forms a vast basin, where, from morning to evening, the sick and infirm of a region ravaged by heresy come to bathe, with a strange confidence in the miraculous virtue of those icy waters.

The monk Beino, enemy of the Saxons. About 616.

According to the legend, this virgin martyr was restored to life by a holy monk called Beino, who, like all the monks of the time, had founded many convents, and received from the princes many contributions for his foundations. Notwithstanding, he exercised a conscientious reserve as to accepting anything which the donor had not a full title to bestow. One day he superintended, in his own person, the building of a church upon an estate which had just been granted to him by King Cadwallon, the conqueror of the Northumbrian[107] Saxons, or rather, had been given in exchange for a golden sceptre, of the value of sixty cows. While there, a woman came to him, bringing a new-born child to be baptized. The cries of the child were deafening. "What ails the child, that he cries so much?" Beino at length asked.

"He has a very good reason," said the woman.

"What is the reason?" asked the monk.

"This land which you have in your possession, and on which you are building a church, belonged to his father."

At that moment Beino called out to his workmen, "Stop; let nothing more be done till I have baptized the child, and spoken to the king." Then he hastened to Caernarvon to the monarch; "Why," cried the monk, "hast thou given me these lands which belong justly to another? The child in this woman's arms is the heir: let them be restored to him."

[106] Evidently the same name as that of the Caractacus of Tacitus.

[107] Bede, book ii. c. 20; book iii. c. 1.

Nothing can be more noble and touching than this evidence of the respect of the cenobites for that sacred right of property which has been so constantly and vilely, and with such impunity, violated to their hurt!

The life of this monk, which was originally written only in the Welsh language,[108] contains other details not less curious. It was he who planted beside his father's grave an acorn, which grew into a great oak, and which, according to the legend, no Englishman could approach without instant death, though the Welsh took no harm. He, too, it was who was driven to abandon a favorite spot on the banks of the Severn, by the sound of an English voice which he heard with horror, from the other side of the river, cheering on the hounds with Saxon cries. "Take up your frocks and your shoes," he said to his companions, "and, quick, let us depart; this man's nation speaks a language abominable to me: they come to invade us, and take away our goods for ever."

The antipathy between the Cambrians and the Saxons a serious obstacle to the conversion of the latter.

These familiar anecdotes of the monk Beino, as well as the martyrdom of Cadoc, the patriot monk and sage, by the hand of the Anglo-Saxons, prove the insurmountable dislike which rose like a wall between the souls of the Britons and those of the Saxons, more than a century and a half after the arrival of the heathen invaders in Britain. The fertile and generous genius of the Celtic race, over-mastered by this patriotic hatred, and by a too just resentment of the violence and sacrilege of the conquest, was thus made powerless to aid in the great work of converting the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. Not only is it impossible to record a single effort, made by any British monk or prelate, to preach the faith to the conquerors; but even the great historian of the Anglo-Saxons expressly states, that the British inhabitants of the great island had come under a mutual engagement never to reveal the truths of religion to those whose power and neighborhood they were obliged to endure — and, at the same time, had taken a vindictive resolution, even when they became Christians, to treat them as incurable heathens.[109] St. Gregory the Great makes the same accusation against them in still more severe terms. "The

[108] Published and translated by Rees.

[109] "Ut nunquam genti Saxonum sive Anglorum secum Britanniam incolenti, verbum fidei prædicando committerent. . . . Cum usque hodie moris sit Brittonum, fidem religionemque Anglorum pro nihilo habere, neque in aliquo eis magis communicare quam cum paganis." — Bede, i. 22; ii. 20.

priests," he said, "who dwell on the borders of the English neglect them, and, putting aside all pastoral solicitude, refuse to answer to any desire which that people might have to be converted to the faith of Christ." [110]

The idea of seeking among the Britons the instruments of that conversion which was to give another great nation to the Church, must then be relinquished. But in a neighboring island, in Hibernia, there existed, in the midst of a population of Celts, like the Britons, a flourishing and fertile Church, the spectator, and not the victim, of the Saxon invasion. Let us see if, from that *Island of Saints*, and from its brave and adventurous race, there may not issue a more generous and expansive impulse than could be hoped for amid the bleeding remnants of British Christianity.

CHAPTER III.

MONASTIC IRELAND AFTER ST. PATRICK.

Ireland escapes the Rome of the Cæsars to be invaded by the Rome of the Popes. — The British assistants of St. Patrick carry there certain usages different from those of Rome. — Division between Patrick and his fellow-laborers. — He would preach the faith to all. — St. Carantoc. — Emigrations of the Welsh to Ireland, and of the Irish to Wales. — Disciples of St. David in Ireland. — Modonnoc and his bees. — Immense monastic development of Ireland under the influence of the Welsh monks. — The peculiar British usages have nothing to do with doctrine. — Families or clans transformed into monasteries, with their chiefs for abbots. — The three orders of saints. — Irish missionaries on the continent; their journeys and visions. — St. Brendan the sailor. — Dega, monk-bishop and sculptor. — Mochuda the shepherd converted by means of music. — Continual preponderance of the monastic element. — Celebrated foundations. — Monasterboyce, Glendalough, and its nine churches. — Bangor, from which came Columbanus, the reformer of the Gauls, and Clonard, from which issued Columba, the apostle of Caledonia.

Ireland escapes the Rome of the Cæsars to be conquered by the Rome of the Popes.

IRELAND, happier of old than Great Britain, escaped the Roman conquest. Agricola had dreamt of invading it, and even of holding it with a single legion; by such a means he would, according to the words of his son-in-law, have riveted the irons of Britain by depriving her of the dangerous sight and

[110] Epist. vi. 58, 59.

contagious neighborhood of freedom.[111] But this intention proved happily abortive. Saved from imperial proconsuls and prætors, the genius of the Celtic race found there a full development: it created for itself a language, a distinctive poetry, worship, and cultivation, and a social hierarchy; in one word, a system of civilization equal and even superior to that of most other heathen nations. In the middle of the fifth century, Rome, Christian and Apostolic, extended its sceptre over the land which the Cæsars had not been able to reach, and St. Patrick carried to it the laws of Christianity.[112] Of British origin, but imbued, like his contemporaries Ninian and Palladius, the apostles of the southern Picts and Scots, with the doctrines and usages of Rome,[113] the great apostle of the Celts of Ireland left the shores of Cambria to convert the neighboring island. He was accompanied and followed by a crowd of Welsh or British monks, who hurried after him, driven to Ireland, as their brothers had been to Armorica, either by terror of the Saxon invasion or by the thirst of conquering souls to the truth.[114]

These British missionaries furnished Patrick with the thirty first bishops of the Church of Ireland,[115] who, in the exercise of their office, substituted or added certain rites and usages, purely British, to those which Patrick had

[111] "Sæpe ex eo audivi, legione una et modicis auxiliis debellari obtinerique Hiberniam posse: idque etiam adversus Britanniam profuturum, si Romana ubique arma, et velut e conspectu libertas tolleretur." — TACIT., *Agricola*, c. 24.

[112] See book vii. page 541, the narrative of the conversion of Ireland by St. Patrick.

[113] "Romanis eruditis disciplinis." — *Vit. S. David*, ap. REES, p. 41.

[114] One of the Roman assistants of Patrick was a St. Mochta, whose legend has been published by the Bollandists, in their vol. iii. August, p. 736. In this legend the mother of Mochta is represented as the servant of a British Druid. The foundation of many monasteries is attributed to him, and the evidently fabulous number of a hundred bishops and three hundred priests as his disciples; but the legend is specially curious as showing a kind of testamentary brotherhood between Patrick and Mochta. "Tunc Mocteus ait: Si ante te de hac luce emigravero, familiam meam tibi committo. At Patricius ait: Et ego tibi meam commendo, si te ad Dominum præcessero; et factum est ita."

[115] "Viros multos litteratos et religiosos . . . e quibus triginta in episcopatus officiis principum sublimavit." — JOCELIN, ap. Bolland., vol. ii. *Martii*, p. 559. It is not necessary to suppose that these bishops had actual dioceses, and a jurisdiction perfectly established, as at a later period. We shall have occasion often to repeat that the bishops of the Celtic churches had scarcely any other functions than those of ordination and transmission of the priestly character. The power of the chiefs of great monastic establishments, who besides often became bishops, was of a very different description. The constitution of dioceses and parishes, in Ireland as in Scotland, does not go further back than to the twelfth century.

brought from Rome. Ireland was converted, but she was converted according to the model of Britain[116] — profoundly and unchangeably Catholic in doctrine, but separated from Rome by various points of discipline and liturgy, without any real importance, which, from the narratives that remain to us of the life of St. Patrick, it would be impossible to define.

Differences between St. Patrick and his British assistants.

Even in the lifetime of Patrick, might there not have been differences between him and his British fellow-laborers on these points? This seems probable, from certain particulars in his history and writings, — as, for example, that passage in his Confession where he says that he had brought the Gospel to Ireland in spite of his *seniors* — that is to say, according to Tillemont, in spite of the British priests. In the obscure and perhaps altered texts of the two Canons of Council which are attributed to him, certain acts which show a violent hostility to the British clergy and monks will be remarked with surprise.[117] The Cambrian legend, on the other hand, expressly points out, among the companions of Patrick, a Welsh monk, Carantoc or Carranog, whom it describes as "a strong knight under the sun," and a "herald of the celestial kingdom;" but takes care to add that, in consequence of the multitude of clerks who accompanied them, the two agreed to separate, and turned one to the right and the other to the left.[118] A still more curious passage of the *Amhra*, or panegyric in Irish verse, addressed to St. Patrick by a monastic bard, may throw a ray of light upon the sentiments which separated that truly apostolic leader from the Welsh monks, who were too often distinguished by their exclusive and jealous spirit. Always faithful to the prevailing sentiment of the Roman Church, which regarded the conversion of a sinner as a greater miracle than resurrection from the dead,[119] the saint is applauded by his panegyrist for having taught the Gospel

[116] This has been learnedly proved and put beyond doubt by M. Varin, in the papers already quoted.

[117] "Clericus qui de Britannia ad nos venit sine epistola (episcopi?) et si habitet in plebe, non licitum ministrare." — Can. 33 du 1er synode. "Cum monachis non est docendum, quorum malum est inauditum qui unitatem vero plebis non incongrue suscepimus." — Can. 20 du 2e synode. *Concilia*, ed. Coletti, vol. iv. pp. 756, 760.

[118] "Sub præsentia solis, fortis miles, mirabilis, spiritalis, summus abbas, longanimus, præceptor fidelitatis . . . præco regni cœlestis." — *Vita S. Carant.*, ap. Rees, p. 98. Compare the legend cited by M. Varin, *op. cit.*

[119] "Majus est miraculum verbo peccatorem convertere quam carne mortuum resuscitare." — Gregorius, *De Vita et Mirac. Patrum*, lib. iv. c. 36.

always without distinction, without difference of caste, even to strangers, barbarians, and Picts.[120]

Whatever these discussions were, however, they did no hurt either to the Catholic faith — for Pelagianism, the leading heresy in Britain, never had any ground to stand on in Ireland[121] — nor to the influence of the great Roman missionary, who has continued the first and most popular saint in Catholic Ireland. The gratitude of the kings and people whom he had converted showed itself in such lavish generosity, that, according to the Irish saying, had he accepted all that was offered him, he would not have left for the saints that came after as much as would have fed two horses.[122] Nothing is more certainly proved than the subordination of the new-born Irish Church to the Roman See — a subordination which was decided and regulated by Patrick.[123] But it is not less certain that Welsh and Breton monks were the fellow-workers, and, above all, the successors of Patrick in Ireland; that they completed his work, and that the Church of the island was organized and developed under their influence, thanks to the continual emigration which took place from Wales to Ireland and from Ireland to Wales, proofs which are to be found on every page of the annals of those times.

Connection of St. David and his disciples with Ireland.

It is to the influence of St. David, the great monk-bishop of Wales, that the history of the two Churches attributes the principal share in the close union of Irish and Welsh monasticism. We have already said that the episcopal monastery which has retained his name is situated on a promontory which projects from the coast of Great Britain as if to throw itself towards

[120] La Villemarqué, *Poésie des Cloîtres Celtiques.*

[121] This is clearly shown by Lanigan, vol. ii. p. 410–15 (*Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*), notwithstanding the affirmation to the contrary of the venerable Bede, l. ii. c. 19.

[122] Lynch, *Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. ii. p. 11, ed. Kelly.

[123] "Item quæcumque caussa valde difficilis exorta fuerit atque ignota cunctis Scotorum gentium judicibus, ad cathedram archiepiscopi Hiberniensium, id est Patricii atque hujus antistitis examinationem recte referenda.

"Si vero in illa cum suis sapientibus facile sanari non poterit talis caussa prædicta negotiationis, ad sedem apostolicam decrevimus esse mittendam, id est ad Petri apostoli cathedram, auctoritatem Romæ urbis habentem.

"Hi sunt qui de hoc decreverunt, id est Auxilius, Patricius, Secundinus, Benignus. Post vero exitum Patricii sancti, alumpni sui valde ejusdem libros conscripserunt." — Canon drawn from MS. in Armagh, which is believed to be written by Patrick's own hand, and is published by O'Curry (*Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Irish History*, p. 611). All the discoveries of contemporary archæology and theology confirm the union of the primitive Church of Ireland with the Church of Rome.

Ireland. The legend narrates that Patrick, while standing on this promontory at a despondent moment, overwhelmed by vexation and discouragement, was consoled by a vision in which there was revealed to him, at one glance, the whole extent of the great island which God had reserved for him to convert and save.[124] David, born of an Irish mother,[125] died in the arms of one of his Irish disciples. Another of his disciples was long celebrated for the service he rendered to Ireland by introducing there the culture of bees. For there, as everywhere, the monastic missionaries brought with them not only faith, truth, and virtue, but, at the same time, the inferior but essential benefits of cultivation, labor, and the arts.

The monk Modonnoc introduces bees into Ireland.

Modonnoc, the monk in question, was a rough laborer, so rugged and intent upon keeping all at work, that he escaped narrowly on one occasion from having his head broken by the axe of a comrade whom he had reproached for his idleness when the two were working together to soften the slope of a road excavated near St. David's monastery.[126] Towards the end of his days, after a long life of obedience and humility, he embarked for Ireland. All the bees of St. David's followed him. It was vain that he turned back his boat, on the prow of which they had settled, to the shore, and denounced the fugitives to his superior. Three times in succession he attempted to free himself from his strange companions, and had at last to resign himself to the necessity of carrying them with him into Ireland, where up to this time they were unknown. By this graceful little story the legend enshrines in Christian gratitude the recollection of the laborious disciple who was the first to introduce the culture of bees into Ireland, where it spread rapidly, and became a source of wealth to the country. It is pleasant to find, in the same legend, that the aged emigrant took special pains, in gathering his honey, to procure a more delicate food than their ordinary coarse fare, for the poor.[127]

[124] "Ex loco in quo stabat, qui modo sedes Patricii dicitur, totam prospexit insulam." — *Vita S. David*, p. 119.

[125] Bolland., vol. i. Martii, p. 39.

[126] "Cum fratribus viam prope civitatis confinia in proclivo cavabat, quo ad deferenda necessitatum onera viantibus facilior fieret accessus. Quid tu tam desidiose et segniter laboras? At ille . . . ferrum quod manu tenebat, id est bipennem in altum elevans, in cervice cum ferire conatus est." — Ap. Rees, p. 133. In this legend the monastery is always entitled *civitas*, which thoroughly answers to the idea of the social and industrial community of which, at that period, a cenobitical establishment was formed.

[127] "Cuncta apum multitudo cum secuta est, secumque in navi ubi inse-

Monastic development of Ireland under the influence of the Cambrian monks.

Thanks to this incessant emigration, Ireland, from the fifth to the eighth century, became one of the principal centres of Christianity in the world; and not only of Christian holiness and virtue, but also of knowledge, literature, and that intellectual civilization with which the new faith was about to endow Europe, then delivered from heathenism and from the Roman empire. This golden age presented two remarkable phenomena: the temporary predominance for one or two centuries of certain rites and customs proper to the British Church, and the extraordinary development of monastic institutions. As to the British peculiarities, in proportion as they become apparent under Patrick's successors, it becomes clear that they differ from Roman usages only upon a few points of no real importance, although at that moment they seemed weighty enough. They vary from Catholic rule only in respect to the right day for the feast of Easter, the form and size of the monastic tonsure, and the ceremonies of baptism [128] — questions which in no way involve any point of doctrine. Nor do they impugn the authority of the Holy See in respect to matters of faith; and it is impossible to support, by facts or authentic documents, those doubts as to the orthodoxy of the Irish, which have been borrowed from the unsatisfactory and partial learning of English writers of the past century by various authors of our own day — such as Rettberg and Augustin Thierry: that orthodoxy was then, what it has always continued, irreproachable.

The British peculiarities do not interfere with doctrine.

The Catholic — the Roman — faith reigned thus without limitation in the great and numberless communities which constituted the chief strength of the Church founded by Patrick and his British fellow-laborers. This Church had been at its very origin clothed with an almost exclusively monastic character. Episcopal succession remained long unknown or

derat collocavit in prora navis. . . . Alveariis ad nutriendos examinum fetus operam dedit quo indigentibus aliqua suavioris cibi oblectamenta procuraret. . . . Hibernia autem in qua nunquam usque ad illud tempus apes vivere poterant, nimia mellis fertilitate dotatur." — Ap. Rees, p. 134. Colgan, however (*Act. SS. Hiberniæ*, 13th February), affirms that they already existed in Ireland.

[128] A learned Englishman of our own day, Dr. Todd, in his *Monograph on St. Patrick*, published in 1863, acknowledges that the Irish Church of the sixth century differed in nothing as to doctrine from the rest of the Catholic Church; but at the same time he maintains her independence of the Holy See. See upon this question an excellent article in the *Home and Foreign Review*, for January 1864.

confused; the authority of bishops, deprived of all local jurisdiction, was subordinated to that of the abbots, even when the latter did not share the episcopal rank. Patrick had converted a crowd of petty princes, chiefs of tribes or clans; indeed, all the primitive saints of Ireland were connected with reigning families, and almost all the converted chiefs embraced monastic life. Their families, their clansmen, their dependants, followed their example. A prince, in becoming a monk, naturally became also an abbot, and in his monastic life continued, as he had been in his worldly existence, the chief of his race and of his clan.

The first great monasteries of Ireland were then nothing else, to speak simply, than clans reorganized under a religious form. From this cause resulted the extraordinary number of their inhabitants, who were counted by hundreds and thousands;[129] from this also came their influence and productiveness, which were still more wonderful. In these vast monastic cities, that fidelity to the Church which Ireland has maintained with heroic constancy for fourteen centuries, in face of all the excesses, as well as all the refinements, of persecution, took permanent root. There also were trained an entire population of philosophers, of writers, of architects, of carvers, of painters, of caligraphers, of musicians, poets, and historians; but, above all, of missionaries and preachers, destined to spread the light of the Gospel and of Christian education, not only in all the Celtic countries, of which Ireland was always the nursing mother, but throughout Europe, among all the Teutonic races — among the Franks and Burgundians, who were already masters of Gaul, as well as amid the dwellers by the Rhine and Danube, and up to the frontiers of Italy. Thus sprang up also those armies of saints, who were more numerous, more national, more popular, and, it must be added, more extraordinary, in Ireland, than in any other Christian land.

It is well known that the unanimous testimony of Christendom conferred upon Ireland at this period the name of *Isle of Saints;*[130] but it is much less known that these saints were all, or almost all, attached to monastic institutions, which retained a discipline and regularity, steady but

[129] The number of three thousand monks is constantly met with in the records of the great monasteries.

[130] "Hibernia, insula sanctorum, sanctis et mirabilibus perplurimis sublimiter plena habetur." — MARIANUS SCOTUS, *Chron.* ad. ann. 696 (A. D. 589), ap. PERTZ, *Monumenta*, vol. vii. p. 554.

strangely allied to the violence and eccentricity of the national character. The ancient relics of Irish tradition show them to us classified, and as if ranged in line of battle, in three orders or battalions, by the poetic and warlike imagination of the Celt: the first, commanded by St. Patrick, was composed exclusively of bishops — Roman, Briton, Frankish, or Scotic[131] — and shone like the sun; the second, commanded by St. Columba, and composed of priests, shone like the moon; and the third, under the orders of Colman and Aidan, was composed at once of bishops, priests, and hermits, and shone like the stars.[132] Let us point out, in passing, in this beatific crowd the famous travellers and the sailor-monks. Such was Brendan, whose fantastic pilgrimages into the great ocean, in search of the earthly Paradise, and of souls to convert, and unknown lands to discover, have been preserved under the form of visions, which are always wonderfully penetrated by the spirit of God and of theological truth.[133] In thus putting imagination, as well as the spirit of adventure, at the service of the faith and ideal Christian virtue, these visions are worthy of being reckoned among the poetic sources of the *Divina Commedia*.[134] They exercised a lively influence upon the Christian imagination during all the middle ages, and even up to the time of Christopher Columbus himself, to whom the salt-water epic of St. Brendan seems to have pointed out the way to America.[135]

The three orders of saints.

By the side of this monkish traveller, let us instance as a type of the religious who remained in Ireland to fertilize it by their labors, a monk-bishop called Dega or Dagan, who passed his nights in transcribing manuscripts, and his days in reading, and carving in iron

Dega, monk, bishop, and artist. † 586.

[131] The word Scotic, though an awkward one, is made use of here and elsewhere to distinguish the Scots of Ireland from the more modern Scottish race which has since identified the name with Scotland alone. — *Translator's note.*

[132] Ussher, *Antiquities*, pp. 473, 490, 913. The very learned Anglican primate was aided in his researches into the history and archæology of Ireland by David Rooth, the Catholic bishop of Ossory, to whom he publicly avows his gratitude in various parts of his works. — See also Lanigan, vol. i. p. 5; vol. ii. p. 13.

[133] La Villemarqué, *op. cit.*

[134] Ozanam, *Œuvres*, vol. v. p. 373.

[135] "I am convinced," he said, "that the terrestrial paradise is in the island of St. Brendan, which nobody can reach except by the will of God." — Quoted by M. Ferdinand Denis, *Le Monde Enchanté*, p. 130. There were two saints of the name of Brendan: the best known, founder of the Monastery of Clonfert, and celebrated for his voyages, died in 577.

and copper. He was so laborious that the construction of three hundred bells and three hundred crosiers of bishops or abbots, is attributed to him, and the transcription of three hundred copies of the Gospels. "I thank my God," he said, while preaching to the monks of Bangor, "that He has made me recognize among you the three orders of monks which I have already seen elsewhere — those who are angels for purity, those who are apostles for activity, and those who would be martyrs, were it needed, by their readiness to shed their blood for Christ." [136]

At that period, as ever since, the love and practice of music was a national passion with the Irish. The missionaries and the monks, their successors, were also inspired by this passion, and knew how to use it for the government and consolation of souls. Another pleasant legend depicts to us its influence, in the form of ecclesiastical chants, upon an Irish youth. Mochuda, the son of a great lord of Kerry, kept, like David, his father's flocks in the great forests which then covered a district now almost altogether without wood. He attracted, by his piety and grace, the regard of the duke or prince of the province, who called him often in the evening to his presence to converse with him, while his wife, who was the daughter of the King of Munster, showed the same affection for the young shepherd. In the wood where his swine fed, there passed one day a bishop with his suite, chanting psalms in alternate strophes as they continued their course. The young Mochuda was so rapt by this psalmody that he abandoned his flock, and followed the choir of singers to the gates of the monastery where they were to pass the night. He did not venture to enter with them, but remained outside, close to the place where they lay, and where he could hear them continue their song till the hour of repose, the bishop chanting longest of all after the others were asleep. The shepherd thus passed the entire night. The chief who loved him sought him everywhere, and when at last the young man was brought to him, asked why he had not come, as usual, on the previous evening. "My lord," said the shep-

Legend of St. Mochuda, 580.

[136] "Hic Dagæus fuit faber tam in ferro quam in ære, et scriba insignis. . . . Gratias ago Deo meo quod S. Moctei postremo similes conventus vos video, tria quippe monachorum genera sibi succedentia habuit: primum puritate angelicum, secundum actibus apostolicum, tertium, ut sancti martyres, sanguinem pro Christo effundere promptum." — Bolland., vol. iii. Augusti, pp. 657, 658.

herd, "I did not come because I was ravished by the divine song which I have heard sung by the holy clergy; please Heaven, lord duke, that I was but with them, that I might learn to sing as they do." The chief in vain admitted him to his table, offered him his sword, his buckler, his lance, all the tokens of a stirring and prosperous life. "I want none of your gifts," the shepherd always replied; "I want but one thing — to learn the chant which I have heard sung by the saints of God." In the end he prevailed, and was sent to the bishop to be made a monk. The legend adds that thirty beautiful young girls loved him openly; for he was handsome and agreeable: but the servant of God having prayed that their love should become spiritual love, they were all, like himself, converted, and consecrated themselves to God in isolated cells, which remained under his authority, when he had in his turn become a bishop, and founder of the great monastic city of Lismore.[137]

This preponderance of the monastic element in the Irish Church — which was due to the fact that the first apostles of the isle were monks, and was at the same time thoroughly justified by the adventurous zeal of their successors — maintained itself not only during all the flourishing period of the Church's history, but even as long as the nation continued independent. Even the Anglo-Norman conquerors of the twelfth century, though they too came from a country where most of the bishops had been monks, and where almost all the sees had begun by being monasteries, were struck by this distinguished characteristic of Irish Christianity.[138]

[137] "Ait dux: Veni huc quotidie cum aliis subulcis. . . . Aliquando sues pascebat in silvis, aliquando manebat in castellis cum duce. . . . Canebat episcopus cum comitibus suis psalmos invicem per viam. . . . Ideo ad te non veni, domine mi, quia delectavit me divinum carmen, quod audivi a cunctis choris, et nusquam audivi simile huic carmini. . . . Nolo aliquid de donis tuis carnalibus, sed volo vere ut carmen quod a sanctis Dei audivi discam. . . . S. Mochuda speciosus erat, et in juventute sua triginta juvenculæ virgines amaverunt eum magno amore carnali, hoc non celantes. Famulus autem Dei rogavit pro eis, ut carnalem amorem mutarent in spiritualem; quod ita est factum; illæ enim virgines seipsas cum suis cellis Deo et S. Mochudæ obtulerunt." — *Acta SS.* Bolland., vol. iii. Maii, p. 379. Mochuda is better known under the name of Cartagh, which was that of the bishop whose disciple he became, and whose name he adopted out of affection for his spiritual father. He died in 637.

[138] "Nam monachi erant maxime qui ad prædicandum venerant." — Bede, l. iii. c. 3. "Cum fere omnes Hiberniæ prælati de monasteriis in clerum electi sunt, quæ monachi sunt, sollicite complent omnia, quæ vero clerici vel prælati, fere prætermittunt universa." — Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topographia Hiberniæ*, dist. iii. c. 29.

Celebrated monasteries of the sixth century in Ireland.

Of all these celebrated communities of the sixth century, which were the most numerous ever seen in Christendom, there remain only vague associations connected with certain sites, whose names betray their monastic origin — or a few ruins visited by unfrequent travellers. Let us instance, for example, Monasterevan, founded in 504, upon the banks of the Barrow; Monasterboyce,[139] a great lay and ecclesiastical school in the valley of the Boyne; Innisfallen, in the picturesque Lake of Killarney; and, above all, Glendalough, in the valley of the two lakes, with its nine ruined churches, its round tower, and its vast cemetery, a sort of pontifical and monastic necropolis, founded in the midst of a wild and desolate landscape, by St. Kevin, one of the first successors of Patrick, and one of those who, to quote the Irish hagiographers, counted by millions the souls whom they led to heaven.[140] Among these sanctuaries there are two which must be pointed out to the attention of the reader, less because of their population and celebrity, than because they have produced the two most remarkable Celtic monks of whom we have to speak.

Clonard, founded by St. Finnian.

These are Clonard and Bangor, both of which reckoned three thousand monks. The one was founded by St. Finnian, who was also venerated as the celestial guide of innumerable souls.[141] He was born in Ireland, but educated by David and other monks in Britain, where he spent thirty years. He then returned to his native country to create the great monastic school of Clonard, from which, says the historian,[142] saints came out in as great number as Greeks of old from the sides of the horse of Troy.

[139] Founded by St. Builhe, who died in 621. M. Henri Martin, in his interesting pamphlet entitled *Antiquités Irlandaises*, 1863, has given an animated picture of Monasterboyce and of that "burying-ground in which there rises a round tower a hundred and ten feet high, of the most graceful poise, and the boldest and finest form. Around it are the ruins of two churches and two magnificent stone crosses; the highest of these crosses is twenty-seven feet in height, covered with Gaelic ornaments and inscriptions. These latter alone repay the journey, for there exists nothing like them on the Continent. As a specimen of Gaelic Christian art, there is nothing comparable to Monasterboyce." M. Martin also remarks, at a distance of three miles, the graceful ruins of Mellifont: "In the depths of a valley, by the banks of a brook, with a church of the ogival period, . . . and, at some steps from the church, a *rotonda* (or chapter-house) with Roman arcades of the purest style." Mellifont was a Cistercian abbey, founded by a community from Clairvaux, whom St. Bernard sent to his friend St. Malachi in 1135.

[140] "Multarum millium animarum duces."

[141] "Innumeras ad patriam animas cœlestem ducens."

[142] Ussher, *Antiquities*, p. 622.

The other, the third Bangor — glorious rival of the two monasteries of the same name in Cambria — was founded upon the shores of the Irish sea facing Britain,[143] by Comgall, who was descended from a reigning family of Irish Picts, but who had, like Patrick, Finnian, and so many others, lived in Britain. He gave a rule, written in Irish verse, to this community, the fame of which was to eclipse that of all other Irish monasteries in the estimation of Europe, and whose three thousand friars, divided into seven alternate choirs, each composed of three hundred singers, chanted the praises of God day and night, to call down His grace upon their Church and their country.

Bangor, founded by St. Comgall, 559.

It was Bangor that produced, as we have already seen, the great St. Columbanus, whose glorious life was passed far from Ireland, who sowed the seed of so many great and holy deeds between the Vosges and the Alps, between the banks of the Loire and those of the Danube, and whose bold genius having by turns startled the Franks, the Burgundians, and the Lombards, disputed the future supremacy over the monastic world for half a century with the rule of St. Benedict. And it is from Clonard that we now await another great saint of the same name, who, restoring and extending the work of Ninian and Palladius, was to conquer Caledonia to the Christian faith, and whose sons at the destined moment were, if not to begin, to accomplish and complete the difficult conversion of the Anglo-Saxons.

Columbanus, reformer of the Gauls, produced by Bangor.

Columba, the apostle of Caledonia, produced by Clonard.

[143] It is now only a village on the shore of the Bay of Belfast, without the slightest vestige of the famous monastery.